DECONSTRUCTING SOCIAL CLASS:
THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS FOR CONVERSATIONS
IN FAMILY THERAPY EDUCATION

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2002

In honor and memory of
my mother, Sarah "Sally" C. Rigney Barolet, my father, C. William "Bill" Barolet,
and my grandmothers, Grace M. Dwyer Barolet & Helen Boucher Rigney.
My first teachers, you nurtured in me a hunger for stories and learning, a profound
respect for people, a love of life with grace, compassion, and integrity.
I am grateful.

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December, 2002

This qualitative research project explored how four U.S. family therapy education programs discussed and deconstructed social class issues. These findings suggested that these programs challenged normative social class discourse by exposing students to clients oppressed by class discrimination and reframing clients' experiences as models of strength, resilience, and resistance. Social class was intentionally woven into classroom discussions, supervision, and incorporated into some curricula. Yet, "the poor" and people of color often became code for and the focus of social class. The social class of professionals both family therapy educators and students were often invisible in the social class equation. This obscured the privileged, the white poor/working-class, and the diverse social class identities of professionals, perpetrating classist assumptions. Circular, systemic reflexivity was recommended to resist the imposition of social class discrimination from the dominant social discourse in family therapy programs.

The design was based on a narrative social constructionist methodology, influenced by feminist and critical theory research. Methods chosen included focus groups, the self-as-researcher, a research team, and grounded theory to guide data gathering and analysis. Participants were self-selected volunteers from the program sites and participated in either a faculty/supervisor or student/therapist focus group. Five guiding questions focused the research and explored social class identity, interacting social constructs, the encouraging and restraining of social class and the impact of social class on therapy and therapy education. The Atlas.ti computer program facilitated on-going data analysis and data management. Researcher self-reflexivity was encouraged via research memos using qualitative criteria to evaluate the process.

Research implications were explored and recommendations made for family therapy educators to increase awareness of class discrimination within the programs, profession, and therapy to raise consciousness of the significance of social class issues in clients' lives and to increase therapy effectiveness. These included self-reflexivity of the mutual social class identities and other interacting social locations of the educator and therapist, examining issues of privilege and oppression, incorporating program reflexivity to explore classism with in the structures of the programs, and circular, systemic reflexivity to examine the influence of the dominant culture on the family therapy program system.

CHAPTER 1
STORYING SOCIAL CLASS

The Significance of Social Class in Therapy Education

Frantic faces of fleeing survivors assaulted us as the World Trade Center collapsed in clouds of fire and smoke. The anguished sag of shoulders framed by the whirling ashes and debris dumped by the cascading inferno of the Twin Towers conveyed despair. If these survivors and the families of victims came for counseling services, would the therapist use a social class lens to explore the meanings of these experiences? How might a white middle class man's experience of this tragedy differ from that of a working-class African American woman or an undocumented foreign worker? How do coping skills, extended family support systems, or financial networks influence these experiences? How might the meaning of long-term unemployment, war, safety, insurance and financial security differ for a working-class service worker, an upper class investor or a downsized corporate middle class manager? How did the threat of anthrax contamination differ according to social class? How might an awareness of social class and its interactions with race, gender, sexual orientation, and other social constructs offer us an opportunity to explore broader aspects of these tragedies and other life experiences?

As a working-class therapist who has chosen to work primarily with poor and working-class folks most of my professional life, I am concerned when we, as supervisors and therapists, miss opportunities to explore client issues through a social class lens. We are beginning to take notice of gender, race, sexual orientation as well as other socially constructed domains of meaning, especially those who work from feminist informed,

social constructionist and/or narrative frameworks. If there is an obvious discrepancy between the economic status of the therapist and client, this may be noted by both, but still may not be discussed. Our knowledge about social class is often constrained, submerged or invisible. While culturally we are encouraged to stereotype "welfare moms" or "rednecks," or yearn for the lives of the "rich and famous," there is little serious dialogue or even language to discuss social class in its complexity.

What restrains us from noticing or talking about the social class issues that we see? What encourages these types of conversations when appropriate both in supervision and later in therapy? What keeps this discourse taboo? In spite of the social constraints, who notices social class issues? How can these exceptions be highlighted and encouraged? What are the historical contexts of these conversations? What purpose does this silence serve and what is the underlying discourse (Foucault, 1982)? How do we as supervisors and therapists serve the cultural discourse rather than meeting our client's needs? What are the webs that weave us, the professionals, and invite us to be silent?

Social class is a construction of reality organized by society in order to make hierarchy appear "natural and inevitable." Laden with value judgments and stereotypes, class "carries implicit implications about the moral character and ability" (Rothenberg, 1995, p. 11) of individuals and class groupings. Social class is a neglected, even a taboo, topic in U.S. society. American people talk about money in a national vocabulary that denotes their status; but they do not openly talk about social class (Lapham, 1988).

Benjamin DeMott (1990, p. 6) calls social class "America's secret." When discussed, the dominant discourse is polarized in terms of the "poor" and "us": the "us" are assumed to be "middle class." Unexamined, classism as a societal discourse scapegoats those who

are least powerful in society and obscures those who most benefit (Alcoff, 1998; Foucault, 1982). Reflecting our culture, family therapy educators often fail to cultivate sensitivity to social class, resulting in therapists' missing client's cues. This results in a lack of sustained discourse about social class within the therapy session.

In *Classism and Feminist Therapy: Counting Costs*, co-editors Marcia Hill and Eleanor Rothblum (1996) challenged therapists to bring the silenced topic of "class to the foreground" (p.168). Therapists must become aware of the powerful social forces that shape the therapeutic relationship and unreflectively share the credo of their culture, including class (Montijo, 1990). Acknowledging class in therapy can counter class privilege and "challenge the psychic constraints of class " (Kliman, 1998, p. 58), such as shame, guilt, resentment and stigma.

It is precisely the lenses of the dominant culture that blind us as therapists, as we have "assumed middle class values and upward mobility as a general cultural aspiration" (Leeder, 1996, p. 50). Because of limited academic attention to these issues, we are not usually expected to develop a theoretical framework to deconstruct social class in therapy. This is complicated by the reduction of social class to economics (Russell, 1996) or a hierarchical ladder of status and lifestyle without an awareness or acknowledgment of the societal power relationships that create and maintain social classes.

In their book, *The Power to Care*, June Hopps, Elaine Pinderhughes and Richard Shankar (1995) team up to review the research regarding outcome studies that specifically focus on therapy effectiveness with "the poor." They conclude that, overall, the studies point to a lack of effectiveness. They attribute this ineffectiveness to an inadequate theoretical base that pathologizes those who are economically disadvantaged.

They suggest that clinicians must also be culturally sensitive and aware of our own cultural lenses. Theories that provide accurate lenses of the target population and the problems that are confronting them are the first components to determining outcome measures that are reliable and valid. Client, therapist, and process variables all must be assessed to determine their influence on the outcome. Until we as therapists recognize how our own class assumptions impact effective therapy and include ourselves in the class equation and the therapeutic unit, therapy with clients from other classes might continue to be less effective.

What is missing in the literature is research on preparing student therapists to attend to social class issues with a wider lens than just clients impacted by poverty. Social class lenses must include a theoretical framework examining the powerful and often submerged cultural discourses which inform our societal belief systems and shape our conversations first in therapy education/supervision and later with our clients. Only then can we begin to unpack the significant social class issues and other issues shaping the problem-saturated stories propelling our clients to seek therapy. This will help us highlight any significant social class issues in the unspoken dynamics in the therapist-client or supervisor-therapist systems. It will also free us to think of expanding possibilities for working with the struggles that constrain us all.

A study of social class must also situate and link this social construct within the structures of different, though related, social constructs. While I am highlighting social class in this dissertation, we must not divorce it from its interactive connections to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and other domains of influence. Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins (1995) describe an additive model of social construction that views

race, class, and gender as separate and either/or categories that demands that people choose a primary identity or views people as either oppressors or victims. They suggest instead that we become more aware of a "matrix of domination" (p.xii) that shapes the life experiences of all peoples. In this dissertation, I will foreground social class while remembering that gender, race, sexual orientation, age, and other "interrelated axes of social structure(s)" (Andersen & Collins, 1995, p.xi) are all significant. Some of these constructs may seem more meaningful for those individuals directly oppressed. When we are also privileged by these constructs, we must begin to deconstruct the meaning of this entitlement and its impact on others.

Development of Research Topic

A Professional Story

I first became professionally interested in social class when working as an International Partner for Habitat for Humanity in Central America along with my family from 1987-1990 facilitating local villages in assisting the poor in building simple, decent dwellings. I was intrigued by the frequent discussions about social class that I encountered working with and among these courageous people impacted by generations of poverty caused by repressive governments, natural disasters, and war. The clarity of their awareness about the differing societal power dynamics and their absence of shame stood out in contrast with conversations I had with many people in the United States where mixtures of defiance and self-blame were more characteristic. Most of the people in the village where I lived and worked occupied two to three room huts made out of available materials – sticks, plastic, some concrete blocks, a zinc roof. Most subsisted on home-grown beans and corn and traded for rice during the few and far between good times. Coffee, *fresca* (a drink made from local fruits), some vegetables grown in the next

valley traded for with the family's chicken eggs and some meat (usually chicken) were usually only available to celebrate the best times.

This was not the first time I had worked with "the poor." And this experience was in contrast to the shame I had encountered in professional experiences as a counselor or family life minister working in church-supported settings such as soup kitchens, food banks and migrant farm work, work I had been involved with since my adolescence. I wondered how social class might be constructed differently in various countries.

As an emerging therapist, when I initially applied for the doctoral program in counselor education, I wanted to explore connections between poverty and shame and the ramifications for therapy. After reflection, I realized that looking only at "the poor" left out important parts of the social class equation in the same way that exploring sex/gender roles by only focusing on women or discussing race by only focusing on African Americans was theoretically insufficient. "The poor" was a code word for social class. This focused on the group of people oppressed by class discrimination but obscured the power of those most privileged by classism. At the same time, I began to value exploring self-of-the therapist issues to be able to sort out our own therapy/supervision issues from those of our clients and supervisees. I did an initial exploration of the literature in the fall of 1996 and was surprised and appalled to see the scarcity of therapy literature on social class. I began to notice that while we as a field at least began to give some lip service to issues of race, gender, age, sexual orientation and other contextual issues, the literature did not examine social class without objectifying and essentializing clients who were "poor." We ignored the strengths, resilience and resistance to classism of those who bear the greatest brunt of our oppressive structures. While further empowerment is an

important goal, we failed to recognize, celebrate and build upon the existing power. This creates a one-sided, deficient and even pathological view of "the poor" while valorizing our own roles as the strong helpers and rescuers without examining how our classism privileges the "professional" or "expert." I felt uncomfortable with the paternalism I encountered, have personally experienced and have, at times, propagated.

Barriers to deconstructing social class

As I began to explore this expanded sense of social class, I struggled with a growing awareness. First, I found myself stumbling for language to describe my research interests to professors and colleagues. I became clearer how taboo social class is in general conversation. I felt inadequate in my formal education to provide a foundation to explore this topic and develop language to communicate findings. Secondly, I began to uncover my own personal, family and socio-political barriers to dealing with these issues. I realized that my own working-class family passed as lower middle class growing up because of the complexity of our family social class identities. Discussion of this topic was discouraged both at home and in school. This created a model that shaped my own sense of social class.

I have passed as middle class within my family and society although the government has labeled my nuclear family "poor" for twenty-eight of the thirty years I have been an adult. This was not conscious "passing" on either my parental or nuclear family's part. "Progressing" and being "successful" within the education system, I have been socialized to see myself as middle class. Shaking these unexamined assumptions was initially very disturbing. I felt waves of shame and confusion. Nonetheless, my intuition told me that what I was exploring was important not only to me personally but for my clients and the field of family therapy.

Oppression sensitive model

At this time, I was finishing my professional training at the Center for Couples and Family Development at the Gainesville Family Institute. The faculty there has developed a model of family therapy called the oppression sensitive model. This evolving model emphasizes the viewing of clients and their issues systemically, sees therapy as a political activity, values diversity, and realizes that reality is culturally defined. Society creates discourses that justify the privileging of some persons while condoning the oppression of others. These discourses are constructed and organized around ability, sexual orientation, race, age, sex/gender, appearance, nationality, spirituality/religion, ethnicity, social class and other aspects of culture. Those with more power including the therapist or supervisor have responsibility to illuminate power differentials and to explore the impact of oppression and privilege on people included within the therapeutic system. The oppression sensitive model (Early, Nazario, & Steier, 1994) highlights people's strengths, resiliency and resistance to oppression.

While I had a good clinical grasp of these issues and how they played out in the world as well, I realized that I had very little theoretical background in these areas. I began studying feminist literature and explored the impact and counter-response of feminist critiques of the discipline of family therapy. This made me more convinced that I needed to explore the inter-linking as well as the differences of race, gender and social class. With a women's studies tuition scholarship, I was able to take some courses that explored these relationships and gave me some theoretical background in disciplines outside of therapy and psychology.

A Theoretical Story

The following year, I taught a course for trainees at the Center for Couples and Family Development. In preparing for this course, I was able to integrate my clinical knowledge with my clinical theory and feminist theory. This narrative, social constructionist perspective informed by feminist and critical theory gave me the theoretical foundation from which to explore social class.

Post-modern therapy

Social constructionist theory was built upon a paradigm shift from modernist to post-modern thinking. Family therapy was influenced by a multitude of post-modern voices (Wick, 1996) including the work of psychologist George Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory, Gregory Bateson's (1972) mental sense-making maps, Michel Foucault's (1980) discourses of knowledge and power, Lyotard's (1979) reflections on language and Humberto Maturana's and Varela's (1987) autopoietic or self-transformation functions of organisms (Soffer, 1993). Other postmodernists included Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967).

Gregory Bateson's (1956) and his colleagues' work was combined with the systemic cybernetic paradigm of Norbert Wiener (cited in Wick, 1996). This theory focused on the structure and flow in families as information-processing systems. Cybernetics referred to the therapist acting as a pilot or keel to the family (boat) to guide them when they became "stuck" in unhelpful patterns. Feminists such as Lynn Hoffman (1990) saw first-order cybernetics as a masculinist paradigm. Families were viewed as machines and the therapist as a repair person. Feminists charged this resulted in mechanistic responses, disempowering the family and ignoring human agency (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Second-order cybernetics

Social constructionist thinking first entered the field of family therapy through the Milan School in Italy. Milan associates Mara Selvini-Palazzoli, Luigi Boscolo, Gianfranco Cecchin, and Giuliana Prata (1980) used a team approach to work with families. They first suggested that the team and later the therapist were co-constructed, subjective parts of the therapeutic system rather than objective observers (Danziger, 1997). Known as cybernetics of cybernetics or second-order cybernetics, this resulted in a "demystification of therapeutic expertise and authority" (Danziger, 1997, p. 404). Using Bateson's ideas, the Milan team looked not only at family patterns but also at patterns of meaning. Adopting a position of curiosity and neutrality "flirt with but don't marry your hypotheses" (Cecchin, 1987), the therapist used open-ended, circular questioning to deconstruct the client's experiences from different viewpoints, especially those of significant others (Fleuridas, Nelson, & Rosenthal, 1986; Penn, 1985; Tomm, 1988).

This encouraged a multiverse view of reality and decenters the dominant cultural perspective. The client entered into dialogue with the therapist, deciding on the most helpful perspective for her/himself further minimizing the expertise of the therapist.

Many therapists who studied with the Milan team adapted and wrote about their work, including Lynn Hoffman, Peggy Penn, Jill Freedman and Gene Combs from the United States, Tom Andersen (1991) with the Tromso, Norway, group and Karl Tomm in Calgary, Canada. Through the Milan team, therapists began to collaborate with non-therapist voices (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Many therapists began to adopt a constructivist, postmodern perspective that suggested that knowledge is constructed and legitimated by a community of knowers.

Lynn Hoffman differentiated social constructionism from constructivism suggesting that in social constructionism there was a change of focus from experiential to social relationships and that those relationships are constituted through language.

Social constructionist therapies challenge the idea that "truth" is unbiased, factual, or universal. One model called the "hermeneutic/dialogic" approach emphasizes the works of Karl Tomm (1987a; 1987b; 1988), Peggy Penn (1985), and Harlene Anderson and Harry Goolishian (1988). Anderson and Goolishian along with their Galveston group introduced "not knowing" and exchanged the model of therapist as expert for participant observer. Tom Andersen (1991), who with his Tromso associates introduced the reflection team, which dissolves the wall or mirror between the team and the client (Smith, 1997; Wick, 1996), is another therapist associated with the hermeneutic/dialogic approach. This method concentrates on discovering many alternative positions or stories without necessarily highlighting what to the therapist might be perceived as a more liberating "story."

This is in contrast to the narrative therapies which take the position that all perspectives are not equally valuable or useful (Smith & Nylund, 1997). Rather, some discourses are more preferred than others while more dominant discourses come from groups that have more power to claim what is "truth" than marginalized groups. While I have learned many ideas from various social constructionist therapies, I have been most influenced by the narrative therapy approach first introduced from Australia and New Zealand by Michael White, David Epston and their associates. It is their narrative therapy approach, often called the "re-authoring" approach, that most resembles a critical theory perspective.

Narrative therapy

Michael White, David Epston, Jill Freedman, Gene Combs, Stephan Madigan, Victoria Dickerson and Kathy Weingarten helped narrative therapy emerge from a postmodern, constructivist into a social constructionist world view. A narrative or story about one's life is the linking together of images and other representations of life-events in a meaningful sequence (Vogel, 1994). Michael White wanted to thicken stories that did not sustain problems rather than being problem-focused. White was encouraged to use the metaphor of "story" or "narrative" by David Epston's anthropology work and Cheryl White's feminist connections (Madigan, 1992).

In narrative theory, change occurs when people's stories are respectfully listened to with a desire to understand from a collaborative perspective of "not knowing" (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992). This creates space for the stories to be experienced from a new perspective during the telling, providing what Bateson (1979) called a double description. White applied Bateson's concept of double description or news of a difference to broaden the scope of therapy to include perspectives on problems or stories that were traditionally suppressed in the dominant culture. This process is enhanced with deconstructive or circular questioning.

White (1986; 1988; 1990) and David Epston (1990) pioneered the "re-authoring" approach to narrative therapy. In re-authoring, the client is supported in re-creating the stories or meanings about her/his life from a more life-giving and less oppressive perspective. White and Epston suggested that certain perspectives or meanings in any socio-cultural context are ignored, downplayed, discouraged, or even prohibited. While White was externalizing problem-saturated stories before he was familiar with French philosopher Michel Foucault, the significance of Foucault's work for White was both the

linking of power and knowledge and the ways that subjects (people) are objectified (Madigan, 1992).

Deconstruction of knowledge and power. Foucault (1980) linked the "twins" of power and knowledge, which together create a dominant social discourse. According to social historian Joan Scott (1990), discourse is a mutual social understanding of beliefs, rules, statements, myths, etc. about life, meaning and behavior that is often reflected in and reinforced by oral and written conversations, speeches, sermons, articles, etc. This "lattice of myths" (Griffin cited in Weingarten, 1998, p.7) is historically situated and "embedded in institutions, social relationships, and texts" Jerome Bruner (1990) described it as the culture forming the mind (Weingarten, 1998). Dominant discourses encourage political or collective amnesia. By marginalizing and invalidating subaltern people's and groups' experiences, these subjugated, counter discourses are no longer available to validate or make meaning out of life.

The dominant or subjugating discourse, what Foucault called global knowledge, is privileged. It is often produced by, always legitimated by, and serves those in power. This global knowledge subjugates, shames, silences and invalidates alternative or local knowledges, marginalizing people who practice different knowledge (Madigan, 1992). Power and knowledge are mutually constitutive, i.e., they are created by the social discourse, which forms the subject, who helps to sustain the social discourse.

Foucault (1980) spoke out against those practices that convert human beings into individuals or "subjects." Subjects exercise self-discipline, internalizing a discourse of social control (Madigan, 1992). Subjects are pressured to share their power, internalizing the cultural discourses and becoming "docile bodies" who behave in ways that collude

with the dominant discourse and supporting power structures (Madigan, 1992). Foucault traced this modern idea of internalized self-control in social structures such as prisons, mental institutions, medicine and medical schools, the military and universities, which cooperate to subjugate those who are "not-normal." The 17th century Panopticon, a completely round prison with open individual cells monitored by a single guard in a central tower, was constructed to promote an "externalized cultural (normative) 'gaze.' This gaze is internalized by the subject, and persuades the subject to practices of disciplining the body deemed desirable by the culture of power" (Madigan, 1992). Women over-exercising or excessively disciplining their sense of hunger in order to strive to attain the media-promoting cultural norm of the ideal body is one example of internalizing this punishing gaze, some even to their death.

Foucault explored three ways that scientific discourse turns subjects into objects. The first mode of objectification is called a "dividing practice" (Madigan, 1992, p. 266). Social groups are divided and set apart, i.e., seen as "other" by those in legitimated social power, e.g., science (Foucault, 1965). There are those who are "normal" and those who are different, i.e., abnormal, inferior and deficient. A large-boned woman who maintained a corresponding body mass would be considered abnormal and inferior, i.e., too fat in the dominant society.

The second mode of subject objectification is called "scientific classification," which includes the documentation or file making on a person (Madigan, 1992), further creating "evidence" for the creation of norms. In the case of the large-boned woman, the medical community would have a file on her that compared her to the "ideal" body weight for women, documenting and legitimating her "abnormal" body. The third mode of

objectification is subjectification in which people actively create their own self-identity by internalizing cultural norms (Foucault, 1980, 1982) and cooperate with society by self-monitoring minds and bodies, sometimes using a cultural authority figure to guide the internalization (Madigan, 1992). The same woman who internalized society's and its medical norms legitimated by her doctor internalized the identity of being "fat" and took on the responsibility to discipline herself to conform to the ideal body weight. Madigan said these three practices "categorize, distribute and manipulate" the subject through objectification (p. 269) – dividing, classifying, and disciplining.

Therapy is political. Feminists (Martin, 1988) have criticized Foucault for not addressing issues of gender (Redekop, 1995) and race (Stoler, 1995), which further divide, objectify and oppressed certain groups of people making it even more difficult to resist the dominant discourse. Feminist critics have also challenged therapists who choose positions of neutrality and refuse to use their authority to take stands against the dominant discourse. "Discourse is embedded in relations of power" (Danziger, 1997, p.410) including societal structures such as therapy and societal authority figures such as therapists.

Narrative therapists are more cognizant of the power and responsibility of the therapist and do not adopt stances of neutrality like Cecchin (1987). Therapy is considered to be political and the therapist works to resurrect stories of subjugation, placing these stories in the larger socio-political context which has worked to undermine them. Therapists support the client's liberation from "dominant knowledge and power practices" (Madigan, 1992, p. 277) while privileging the client's local knowledges. Narrative therapists take a stand against the problem of subjugating discourses that dictate how

people should or should not behave (Dickerson & Zimmerman, 1996; Efran, 1994). Neither the person nor her/his body is the problem; "the problem is the problem" (Madigan, 1992, p. 278). In the politics of storying, not all accounts are equal in power. Narrative therapists resist the notion of a person's essence or "true self" (Freedman & Combs, 1996, p. 35) believing that people can learn to constitute or see themselves differently, in more preferred ways (Dickerson & Zimmerman, 1996).

Externalizing the internalized dialogue. White's most significant contribution to narrative therapy is his externalizing of the internalized problem discourse (Madigan, 1992). Externalizing is a way of thinking, not a technique and is "profoundly political" (Dickerson & Zimmerman, 1996, p. 88). Externalizing separates the person from the problem and explores the question, "Is the talk about the problem gaining more influence over the person or is the person's talk gaining more influence over the problem?" (Madigan,1992, p. 271). Having a problem "creates the possibility of imagining oneself in a different relationship to the problem" (Weingarten, 1998, p. 9) while being a problem objectifies and severs us from our lived contexts.

White first helped the person to externalize the problem and then map the problem's influence on the person and her/his relationships. This allows space to explore unique or following Goffman's (1974) "preferred outcomes" or exceptions - the times the person has resisted the problem. The person is then encouraged to "engage in performances of new meaning," i.e., using E. Bruner's idea that by performing new ways of living, new meanings are created (cited in Madigan, 1992, p. 275). The practice of externalizing locates and frees people's "counter-discursive practices," contributing to further "insurrection" of other marginalized knowledges (Madigan, 1992, p. 276). Karlene Faith,

however, cautioned us not to *romanticize* marginalization that comes from resistance (cited in Danziger, 1997).

Collaboration vs. expertise. Narrative approaches, like other social constructionist therapies, move from an objective therapist as scientist/expert to a position of curiosity about the unique perspectives and circumstances of this particular client's life-story. Narrative therapists are co-travelers who help clients to unearth alternative stories from their life experiences (Weingarten, 1998). The client, having expertise in her/his own life, decides the direction and goals for therapy while the therapist, having expertise in therapy process, helps the client through radical listening to hear unique outcomes and preferred stories.

This more collaborative client-therapist model creates space through dialogue for alternative perspectives, meanings and possible actions. Narrative therapy challenges hierarchy, authority and focus on "co-evolution" of client and therapist (Hoffman, 1990; Wick, 1996). As this differs from the expertise of the typical medical model, therapists need to be alert to the temptation of expertise conferred by clients (Danziger, 1997). Because the therapist has more power in the relationship, s/he must be constantly alert to the client's non-verbal as well as verbal messages to determine how free the client is to share her/his voice and interpretation about what is happening in her/his life. Therapists do this by being self-reflective and being transparent about their beliefs (Freedman & Combs, 1996). The therapist must work to adjust the pace and content of the session to privilege the client's voice (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992).

Kathy Weingarten (1998) warned of the power to silence and force consensus, legitimizing one position over others – melting and meshing all positions or viewpoints

into one viewpoint while empowerment is accepting the validity of another's differing viewpoint. Therapists must monitor their own power and influence in the therapeutic relationship. As Weingartern (1998) reminded us, discourse can powerfully shape the stories we can tell and the stories we can hear. Discourses influence what we can know and not know, see and not see, say and not say, in complete and subtle ways (p. 7).

Agency and resistance. Narrative therapy helps clients to examine the influences of the problem in their lives and explore preferred options, helping them "revise their priorities and strategies for living" (Efran, 1994, p. 226). People are often hypnotized by subjugating, problem-saturated and "self-limiting" stories (Wick, 1996). By "radically listening" (Weingarten, 1998, p. 4), the therapist can provide space for recognizing exceptions, alternative tellings, when the client has resisted the spell of the problem-saturated stories. This occurs through a process Maturana and Varela (1987) called 'orthogonal interaction.' The therapist assists the client in "knocking askew" and stepping outside the "club rules" as "hidden elements tumble into view" allowing both client and therapist to see "things anew" (Efran, 1994, p. 219, 222), including their unique history of resistance, their capabilities and the possibilities for further resistance. These exceptions deconstruct the dominant, problem-saturated story, loosening its power to coerce. It is important to help the client see these issues in socio-historical context to tie these ideas to the interests of the powers that be rather than merely an individual's "(ir)rationalities" (Lutz, 1997, p. 102). The stories we tell ourselves, particularly the silent or barely audible ones, are very powerful. They become invisible enclosures (Griffin cited in Weingarten, 1998).

People are situated in and influenced by a multiplicity of contexts. When a dominant story obscures more marginalized stories, agency or ability to choose is diminished. Therapy is about unpacking the storied meanings behind the problems generated in a community context, creating patterns of social action (Efran, 1994; Dickerson, 1996). Miracle questions (questions that encourage the client to dream of new possibilities) might be used to understand a client's preferences – entering into a "landscape of consciousness in an alternative story" (Dickerson & Zimmerman, 1996, p. 87). By surfacing alternative stories, people can play a part in choosing what their actions will be; i.e., people can become more instrumental in their decision-making (Dickerson & Zimmerman, 1996). Stories are constitutive or shaping of people's lives. As people claim their alternative stories and "perform these stories" (White, 1989, p. 7) their lives and relationships expand. As Kathy Weingarten suggested, "every story entails others, that life is more prism than road" (Weingarten, 1998, p. 10).

Language. Language "does not represent a previously existing objective world but constitutes such a world…scientific and lay knowledge do not differ (Danziger, 1997, p. 406). For Varela (1979) language reproduced the values, power structure and social order of the community it represents (Efran, 1994). Writer Anais Nin commented, "We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are" (cited in Efran, 1994, p. 221). Our language reflects the same dynamic.

Life, however, is embodied. Many feminists and others warn of the narrative dangers of exclusively focusing on language, losing "the power of direct experience. After language takes hold, all precepts are linguistically encoded, and life is lived within a cocoon of shared explanatory fictions" (Efran, 1994, p.220). Even sensory experiences

are influenced by beliefs about the world (Wick, 1996). While language is powerful and the basis of our social construction of the world, communication is more than language and needs to include non-verbals, play, art, dance, and the use of the senses (Wick, 1996).

Interdisciplinary collaboration. Narrative therapists have benefited from wandering outside disciplinary boundaries to reap the benefits of scholars from other disciplines as well as having the humility to learn from clients. As therapists, Lutz reminds us to look beyond our disciplinary fences to the "fields that are often blocked from view by the fencing" that is the result of both the disciplining of scholars and the limits of time for intellectual exploration in the newly sped-up institutions where academics work" (Lutz, 1997, p. 101). Like the enclosure laws that forced people off farms and created barriers between ranchers and farmers, Lutz challenges us to explore beyond our "own narrow rows." Looking beyond the theoretical paradigms to the structures that produce them, might clarify "what may be in the way of the unfencing and remaking of our scholarly practices as well" (Lutz, 1997, p. 103).

A Personal Story

In addition to a professional and theoretical "story," I have also come to this research project via a personal story. When my dissertation committee suggested I situate myself in my research, as the "quiet, serious one" in a family of Irish-American storytellers, I didn't think I had the gift of the "gab." I struggled with freeing my academic, "scientific" voice and then suddenly in the process of writing, my fingers would be flying, immersed in my own story. I would emerge, look at what I had written and have hot flashes of embarrassment at my vulnerability and lack of "objectivity." Yet, I knew this was what had first brought me to this research. I wondered what I could salvage from all those words. I would start again the next day, and the next, until I finally gave up with the

thought that I'd leave this thorny problem until the end. I finally realized that this story is no more blarney than my professional story (Freedman & Combs, 1996). And here is the rest of the story....

Childhood

As the sixth in a working-class family of nine children, I had playmates, adequate housing and food. I was only vaguely aware of social class issues as a pre-schooler. Friends and cousins might have more things but without voluminous television advertising, these rarely received more than a passing, curious glance. I was content to climb trees, explore and be part of any instant baseball team when my older siblings needed a warm body to chase a ball or build a fort. I only went out to eat once with my parents: a brunch to celebrate my First Communion, an important Catholic ritual. With adequate food, a few birthday/Christmas toys, and the hand-me-downs from siblings and cousins, my family-centered life as a young child, was peaceful and content.

My extended family was at the bottom of the class hierarchy on both sides of the family. Both my grandfathers were ethnics, one a first generation French-Canadian and the other, second generation Irish. Each started as factory workers and family farmers as their fathers had but were able to move into more skilled work and management at the turn of this century as more immigrants and blacks moved in to take the "unskilled" factory jobs. All my uncles on both sides of our family were the first in their families to complete high school and go on to college, pushed by their fathers. My father was the only male that did not finish college; school meant athletics to my father and his father's premature death from overwork meant money suddenly was not available for schooling.

Like her own mother and paternal aunt who had finished "normal school" to become teachers, my mother, on the other hand, embraced school as a place of solace, escape and

self-esteem after the death of her mother when she was a preschooler. My mother reveled in being an "intellectual" and proudly held a college degree. Both my biological grandmothers were strong; women who highly valued formal education, perhaps because each had an immigrant parent. Childhood sweethearts and schoolmates, education was a common friction between my parents as my father disdained "book learning" and the follies of intellectual fools while my mother prided herself on her education.

My Catholic identity connected me to my grandmothers, my uncles and cousins and made me different from others. This identity tied into our home parish in Rhode Island, the church that baptized us, married my folks, and buried all my grandparents. It was reinforced by crucifixes, rosaries, prayer cards, statues, scapulars, candles, holy water, ritual gestures, mass, nightly prayers, and prayer mantillas as well as seasonal celebrations (Lent, Advent), catechism, fasting and abstaining from meat on Fridays. This identity informed my mother's active involvement in teaching and community organizing through educational, religious, civic, and political organizations. It girded my dad's involvement fixing things for working-class neighbors and especially in their later years, my parents' hospitality and friendships with marginalized people of different social classes, races, sexual orientation, religion, regions, ages, and abilities. My parents welcomed people into their home on a daily basis and many of these people became part of our extended family.

Before World War II, my father was in the merchant marines, worked in a chemical factory and was an ironworker. When he crushed several disks in his back saving a co-worker from a steel I-beam, he became disabled at a time when there were no disability checks and back operations were too risky, especially for a man with a large and growing

family. He worked as a carpenter and eventually used his GI Bill to become a helicopter pilot, a job that aggravated the back pain he endured throughout his life. My father's occupation appeared middle class. Certainly being a helicopter pilot in the 50's and early 60's before Vietnam was a unique and glamorous job. My father earned many firsts as a helicopter pilot including having survived the first rotor wing crash and flying the first helicopter on television in an *I Love Lucy episode*. Yet, because my father did not own the helicopters, he had no control over his hours and his personal safety. He never was in a position to either convince management to improve the pay for those in the crew who worked hard to keep him safe nor fire those who sometimes threatened his life by their haphazard response to maintenance. The work he found paid poorly, especially for a family of nine children, because helicopters pre-Vietnam was considered a novelty. Higher paying jobs required travel.

My mother was a frustrated teacher who found out she could not work a regular job because mysteriously, she would become sleepy and fall asleep. As her disability progressed, and the number of children grew, my father and older siblings became more involved with the care of the younger children. By the time I came along as the sixth child, my father was actively involved with our care along with my elder siblings. While my mother was able to participate actively in volunteer work outside the home, her frequent naps, taken wherever she could find a corner, prohibited employment. It was not until she was in her sixties that she was diagnosed with narcolepsy and cataplexy. She was allergic to the medication that might have controlled its effects.

My father quit his job on a matter of principle when I was seven. I then noticed more class differences including space. We moved "back home" to my grandfather's farm

changing from a huge, rental house to a small trailer. My father's exquisite carpentry skills transformed this old travel trailer to become home for our now family of ten as my oldest sister was at college. My father creatively used every available inch of space, building the couch into the wall, making cabinets everywhere. Five of us slept on one set of bunks. My youngest sister slept in my mother's bunk of my parents' hallway bedroom. Two older brothers slept in the tiny living room. The smell of polished, varnished wood and the reflected lightning bouncing over the walls still fills my memories. Each of us had a drawer for clothes and toys. I grieved for my Yankee baseball cards, my baking set and my bike. Along with my sister's beloved collie, many precious things were left behind at our grandparents' as we crossed the US in a job-search for my father and a new life for our family.

We settled into a rough and tumble trailer park in rural, northern Arizona. I played with children whose families had more money than mine did, but less than we previously had. These children had toys, clothes and pets while I had horny toads, chipmunks and turtles. I owned one pair of pants, adored white Levi's hand-washed daily by my mother. My only dress worn on Sundays for church was made especially for me. I wistfully longed for cowboy boots like my friends. My joy was three precious Christmas books sent to me by my adored and terribly missed oldest sister. Many of the Mexican American children at school seemed poorer than I, especially those at the mission church my family attended. Other Mexican American children were affluent and attended the "in-town" Catholic school and church. The other poor children at school that I played with were the Navajos who boarded away from their families.

We lived most of the daylight hours exploring the outdoors. When groceries ran out my siblings helped or the neighbors shared their paycheck this week and we reciprocated the next. My father had long, discouraging job searches and later, employment that kept him away during the week. I became conscious of my parents' uneasiness when their friends visited. I knew that things were tight financially and that this was a source of tension between my parents. As they did not argue in front of the children, I was happy and paid scant attention to the details of this stress.

My parents had moved west and stopped to visit a couple that they had befriended during WWII. As an older couple and my father a flight instructor, my parents used to offer hospitality and support to young military families. Now the shoe was on the other foot. A former student from one of the most affluent and powerful families in the state was now offering them help. My father refused the job offers from him, fearing being indebted and risking their friendship. As two nine children Catholic families, we shared some memorable times, though the financial contrasts were extreme. These social class differences may have contributed to our moving back "home" to Rhode Island, leaving my oldest brother behind.

Surrounded by family, I attended Catholic school tuition-free, because of my now deceased maternal grandfather's previous involvement and financial support of the parish. At eight, my first job was herding the cows from the pastures to the barn each summer night on the family farm. I also worked with my paternal grandmother weeding and transplanting flowers and burning the trash, proud of her trust in me.

My father continued to search for work as a pilot that would support our family of six children (the three eldest had moved out). We moved to Central Florida when he found

work as a citrus crop-duster. The next couple of years I babysat and did odd jobs. At eleven, I tried selling door-to-door along our semi-rural neighborhood and was known for years as "the little girl who sold greeting cards." My first "real" job was ironing my two next-door neighbors' twenty-five dress shirts. Except for burns, this "cushy" job was heavenly because of air conditioning, a stereo and time away from family. When I was twelve, I worked in an elderly neighbor's craft store in our little sleepy village.

My mother was convinced that something was different with her youngest. The experts assured her that she was "normal." When the words "mentally retarded" first were pronounced, she struggled with the blame for the child that was born "defective." My parents were caught between two world views: the church "experts" who praised my parents for my mother's bearing of all those children and the medical "experts" who blamed them for the same thing. My parents had cried for joy after a Catholic doctor told my mother that she had to have a hysterectomy as her womb was shattered.

The doctors told them that for the "good of the family," my parents must put my very hyperactive, sometimes explosive, mentally challenged sister in an institution. Barren of solutions to support my family, they suggested ripping out one of our family members to put the problem where *she* belonged, as if she were an orphan. Tina was the "Other." We visited several public and one religious institution and were frightened by the coldness, austerity, uniformity, and sheer size of these sterile institutions. The children looked drugged and pathetic. My parents cried. They could not afford in-home assistance or in-patient, private care. The "experts" did not understand they were ripping out our hearts.

At thirteen, I was already the family helper, actively caring for my maternal grandmother when she was dying of cancer. Now I became the translator of the

jargonese of the distant, cold, impersonal "experts" for my dazed parents who were treated as incompetent parents. In their search for answers, help and comfort, they were given blame and confusion. Years later, my father confessed he felt guilty and torn with the conflicting responsibilities of caring for each of his children. Which one should he sacrifice? My mother renewed her Novenas to the Infant Child of Prague – protector of innocent children and to Saint Jude, the intercessor for impossible causes, praying for a more home-like atmosphere run by good-hearted nuns.

Throughout high school, I cared for my youngest sister and I babysat, developing a regular clientele, including one family I worked for weekly. The well-behaved children were thrilled to see me and I had several hours of quiet to do homework after their bedtime. Food was abundant and I was grateful for the extra nourishment. Another Catholic family had nine children under eleven. Living in a semi-rural, working-class area, I was used to old houses but this house was particularly tired and worn-down. The suppers I cooked were watered-down stew and the Kool-Aid was little more than colored water. Bath time was an incredible ordeal with children fighting constantly. When the parents returned after bedtime, I was exhausted. While I recognized the economic disparity between the families I did not understood the impact of poverty.

As a Girl Scout camp counselor, I "earned" opportunities to participate in many unique adventures and experiences that my parents could not afford and gained incredible leadership skills as the teenage Scouts ran the camps with supervision. We were treated respectfully and our opinions were woven into the resulting project. Girl Scouting encouraged diversity in race, ethnicity, nationality, social class, ability, spirituality and

orientation, although it wasn't overtly named *sexual* orientation because *SEX* was still taboo. People with different lifestyles were accepted. Diversity was visually present.

I participated in the "Greening of Sumter County," an eye-opening project sponsored by local black congregations. We held day camps in schools to bring Girl Scouting into this rural, impoverished area. We quickly learned to adapt our expectations as many young girls brought along pre-school siblings to participate in the singing, dancing, art projects, cooking, and storytelling. Every evening, we had more training and planned more activities. On Saturdays, we visited the local community homes. Every Sunday we attended another black church with the congregation hosting a potluck supper after the service. It was a warm, memorable experience of partnership.

A friend and I were the first guitar players in the new Catholic "folk mass" a leap from the traditional mass. Two dynamic Cuban nuns moved into our parish and took me under their wing. Their guitars, their songs, their intelligence, their assertiveness, their humor and their outreach to the Mexican-American migrant community entranced me. I had always been interested in the Spanish language. My first memories had been vestiges of my family's experiences in Panama before my birth, e.g. my father's use of phrases such as "Good night," "See you tomorrow," "Go with God" as well as the positive effect it had on my parents. Those speaking various accents of Spanish including our Mexican-American migrant neighbors, the Spanish priests, and the Cuban nuns peopled my childhood in Arizona and Florida. I was thrilled to be included via my guitar playing at Spanish folk masses around the county, in contrasting social class settings, playing outdoors to poor Mexican/Mexican-American families and inside churches to middle-class Cuban/Cuban-American families, welcomed, *Angla* that I was.

I became involved in the migrant ministry, helping with breakfasts, clothing and food closets. I worked as a student teacher with mentally and physically handicapped children. My junior year, I was paired with a professional social worker who I accompanied on weekly home visits for at least a semester. I was impressed with her sensitivity, her helpfulness, her humility and her valuing of her clients. I began to apply to college social work schools.

I had been involved in athletics throughout my school years. I played softball, tennis and basketball. I ran track and did gymnastics. These experiences exposed me to strong examples of racially diverse young women as my teammates. My senior year, I worked in a cafeteria to earn money for senior activities and college. I reluctantly gave up the tennis team, the only women's sport that had "varsity" status as the others were "inter-mural," i.e., non-funded as this was the year before Title IX was passed. I bused tables, washed dishes and floors, waited tables, and occasionally cooked. I learned how people treated those of us in subservient positions. I watched the tongue-tied surprise and discomfort of teachers on encountering their straight "A" student mopping floors. Since I bused to school from a neighboring village, they knew nothing about my background. Eventually, the harsh chemicals created a painful case of eczema that would not heal.

A local photographer offered me a job after he took a picture of me for the school yearbook, impressed with my knowledge of photography and darkroom developing. Encouraged to go out and "burn film," my artistic shots began appearing with my byline in the local newspaper along with those of my boss. By the end of the summer, I was romantically involved with the boss, a not too uncommon event for working-class girls yet inappropriate given that I was 17 and he was fourteen years my senior. While my

parents may have worried, they never addressed this issue with me. They had their hands full surviving.

My first year of college I covered Nixon's inauguration for the newspaper until my boss rewrote my front-page cover story with the subtitle, "You can take the girl out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the girl" misrepresenting my impressions, and distorting my political orientation. When I protested, my boss- soon to be ex-boyfriend bushed off my complaints because it was "good copy."

Adulthood

My father told me with embarrassment that he could not afford to send me to college and suggested the local "junior" college or better, becoming an airline stewardess. This sparked a determination to earn a scholarship that I won to Catholic University's social work program in Washington, D.C., unaware that its favorable reputation was from the graduate program.

My first year in college I learned about social policy and program that Nixon soon destroyed with a pen-stroke. I also learned that most social work students went on to graduate school, an unthinkable goal for me as a "lower middle-class" student. Discouraged, I changed my major to counseling psychology and religious education. The seeds were planted, however, to understand "the poor" not as a deficient group, but rather both as powerful and victimized by society. I tutored in the Latino Columbia road district in DC and in my local northeast black neighborhood. The neighborhood people who trained me worked from models of empowerment, taught me to respect, and learn from the people. I was exposed to the work of Paulo Freire, a Brazilian social critic and educator who taught that liberatory education should be based on oppressed people's own life experiences.

I worked in the student dining hall my first year in college, occasionally eating with my friends, disguising the bleach smell on my hands with fresh lemon juice. My working seemed invisible to them but painfully obvious to me as I hurried off to do dishes when others leisurely shared and made plans. The second year, I worked in the priest-professor's private dining room. Double majoring in counseling psychology and religious education, several priests were my professors. Tables were set in the stately hall with white linens, crystal, and a complete silver setting. We watched from the swinging door windows in the kitchen and as glasses and bowls emptied, and silverware retired, we swooped down, bringing food, filling glasses, removing dirty plates, correctly, silent, invisible. The whole experience could have been very demeaning, except for Mary.

Mary was an older African American cook who made an astounding array of delicious and visually artistic dishes, as well as having an infectious sense of humor. Mary worked hard and did not tolerate slackers. If you pulled your weight, she would look out for you and teach you to survive and defy the situation. Mary had a nickname for most of the priests and she told us stories that kept us laughing. When she was not joking or story telling, her spiritual singing would make the hours fly by.

My third year, I did a psychology practicum and became weekend staff in a "home for unwed mothers." I was thrilled because the staff bedroom and bath was the first time in my life I had my "own" room. Every weekend as the sun was beginning to glow in the east, I caught my first of several buses to a large Victorian mansion with massive antiques, lace curtains and huge rooms on the northwest side of D.C. The girls' living facilities were in an institutional-like annex. The social class issues were obvious. Dorm rooms were shared except by the upper class who had singles. Class was also

marked by possessions. Generally, middle and upper class girls gave their babies up for adoption, working class girls kept their babies, against the prevailing wisdom. I was amused and angered by the director's daily memos requesting more "lady-like" behavior from the girls. While I tiptoed down the sleepy college dorm halls and emerged in the crisp, dawn air, I felt proud of my financial independence, although I envied my friends' adventures. We slowly grew apart as I worked even summers in clerical and other service work to pay for my expenses.

My last semester I worked as a poorly paid sacristan (janitor). One month my diet was leftover rice, ketchup and sugar and unconsecrated wafers or hosts to fill my gnawing belly. I helped renovate an old house for campus ministry and was involved in spaghetti suppers and other fundraising, ran a community-tutoring program and helped provide religious services. Though a "needy" student, because of my sex I had been denied a room in the house. After two years of volunteer work and daunting obstacles to discourage me, I became the first woman to break that barrier.

I enrolled in an exciting summer program that integrated scripture, group theory and a community practicum. Working as a pastoral minister for elderly infirm or housebound parishioners, I visited nursing homes, hospitals and apartment complexes listening to people's stories, learning about illness, disability, poverty, and dying.

I moved to Florida to be closer to my fiancé and finish my degree. My psychology mentor had become more blatantly sexually harassing and the religion department chair feared that I would never graduate if I left D.C. I continued to work with a challenging religion professor who helped bridge the wide abyss between these two fields and encouraged me to study Bowen and the emerging field of family therapy.

While finishing my degree, I worked in sales and customer service in a nationally known department store. Overwhelmed by my manager's complaints of my laziness, his constant negative attitude and later, his accusations of stealing, I began getting migraine headaches. Was I really so slothful? Why did I feel so incompetent and nervous? I finally realized how miserable the other employees were as he bullied and belittled people. He abused manager privileges, taking personal time under the guise of work time, reducing prices before he got his manager discounts and "pocketing" items. Before my wedding, he refused to give me New Years Day off. When five o'clock rolled around in the middle of inventory, I walked off the job, expecting to be fired. I survived there long enough to be forced to take a lie detector test to figure who was stealing from the drawer. "Have you ever seen an employee steal?" they asked. "Yes," I announced to their shocked faces. "Who?" they asked. "The manager," I replied. There was a change of managers before I left.

After my BA and later, my MA, I had a series of "professional" jobs in the "helping" or service, non-profit sector. I worked as a youth, adult education, family life and pastoral minister, director of a community college parenting program and in a residential children's unit. I worked with Habitat for Humanity both in the U.S. and three years in Central America and as a Catholic Worker in soup kitchens and food banks. I liked being a scholar-political activist in the Catholic Worker Movement inspired by Dorothy Day, serving the very marginalized in society. I preferred the more pro-active and international focus of Habitat in spite of the "giving a hand-up rather than a hand-out" philosophy that smacked of a smug, patriarchal stance.

We never made enough to provide a comfortable wage for my family. Even with my partner's salary, with two children, only one year did we actually make more than the federal poverty guidelines. That year, another parish priest who had not originally hired us, refused to renew our contract because of the "mercenary" wage we were asking (to help us pay for student loans) and used the money to pave the church parking lot. After ten years of working for the Catholic Church, we changed professions.

I tried to pursue my dream of being a therapist. I was volunteering as a telephone counselor at a crisis center and co-leading a women-in-transition group as well as doing pastoral counseling. I was exploring how to finance a Ph.D. while still paying for my MA when the pre-natal loss of my third child, plunged me into grief. When I could not find a supervisor for less than $90 an hour, this dream went on hold for a decade.

The last service job I worked before training as a therapist was as a salesperson and later minimum-wage "acting manager" at a new children's bookstore. I learned about computers, inventory, ordering, sales and advertising and organized reading circles, speakers and a biblio-therapy section. I loved my job and flexible hours but hated the way my boss verbally abused the other salespeople and poorly paid me without benefits. Knowing I was being exploited, I asked for a raise. My often-absent boss begrudgingly gave me an additional 25 cents an hour! When my mother died, I was not paid for the time off. I finally found a counseling job that accepted my family ministry master's degree with my experience.

I have lived my life with integrity and without regrets although spending too much energy in "passing" to protect myself from the moral judgment of insensitive and privileged people – people who do not understand or support my decisions and blamed

me for the consequences. Although below the poverty level, I have had adequate housing, clothing and food. Our home is warm and welcoming although we do not have cable, video games, a pool or large family room and rarely use our AC. Some of our children's friends refer to our interracial, working-class neighborhood as "the ghetto" because it is located on the "wrong" side of town. Only my mentally challenged sister and one brother who lived with us have ever spent significant time here.

Adequate dental and medical care has eluded us; e.g., my partner has endured dental students learning to extract teeth from his jaw. We have changed dentists several times when they have attempted to shame us into getting dental care while refusing to take payments or give us reduced fees. We have prioritized the children's health.

All of these life experiences as well as the vicarious one through my clients' stories have opened my eyes to the complexity of social class and its interaction with gender, race, ethnicity, ability, nationality, age and sexual orientation. While as a profession we are beginning to explore some of these identities, social class has most intrigued me partly because of its "silent" not-to-be discussed aspect as well as the complexity of my own social class identity.

Meanwhile, my father had walked away from too many helicopter crashes. Friends were not so lucky. Hasty calculations forced to fly in unsafe conditions, and too many flying hours caused one friend to burn to death when his overloaded ship crashed. When forced to fly at night, after too many close encounters with electrical wires, my father took an early social security retirement essentially without a pension. My father died after years of exposure to toxic chemicals as a "crop duster." Although their own home was falling down, its sale after their deaths allowed me to put $1000 dollars down to buy my

own home and an equal amount towards student loans because of my parents' sacrifices. Their love and example are my most precious inheritance.

While most of my siblings have enjoyed a middle class and a few even upper middle class lifestyles, the working-class values and perspectives still protrude like ribs until supple flesh. While most of my siblings attended college, like my father, they did not complete college. Beside me, only one sibling has a degree, a Vietnam veteran who used the GI Bill to quietly complete his education, discovered only by seeing it on a home office wall. Education is downplayed, even disdained in my family, most of whom think I'm crazy to pursue a doctoral degree unless it will propel me into the upper middle class economically, not just professionally.

These are the perspectives that inform my standpoint and interest in this research. There are those that would say that my transparency and personal story does not have a place in family therapy research. As a feminist-informed, social constructionist theorist, practitioner, and researcher, I agree with Magda Gere Lewis (1993):

> The voices of my social difference will be heard in this text. However, this is not a theoretical liability. Rather it is the basis for political action. I believe by achieving solidarity across our differences-however these may be marked in gender, class, race, ethnicity, desires of the body, body proficiency and presentation, or any other socially divisive category of our human be/ing-is the challenge of feminist practice. (p.17)

Social class is one of our social differences. I think unearthing social class and challenging classism is important for helping our clients understand the meaning of the joys and struggles from their own life stories.

Overview of Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I will explore theoretical perspectives on social class. I will first examine our "classical inheritance" (Crompton, 1995)–that of Plato, Marx and Weber,

that informs much of the present debate. I will then examine some of the more prevalent

cultural beliefs that emerged from the often-unexamined discourses of our U.S. historical

experiences. The first group of cultural myths will be examined from a social class

perspective. The next group of myths will be examined from the perspective of the

interacting lenses of race, gender and class, highlighting submerged aspects of our

cultural myths that are usually unspoken though understood. Finally, I will then examine

how feminist scholarship has contributed to and expanded the dialogue about social class.

In Chapter 3, I will present a historical perspective, exploring social class in US

society and its interactions with other social constructions in a matrix of domination,

especially race and gender. The labor historian, Jacqueline Jones (1998) suggested the

importance of constructing a context to raise a historical consciousness or even a historic

conscience. Expanding the monocular lenses of family therapy, we begin to appreciate

how tightly woven the interconnecting strands of these and other oppressions are

throughout our histories as American peoples. Just as my own personal history provides

a context for my professional orientation, so does our shared cultural history provide a

context for our work as professionals and therapists. I will focus more attention on the

time periods up until the last two decades with the assumption that these latter time

periods are part of the lived experience of current family therapist educators.

In this historical overview, the focus will be on the subjugated and marginal stories

that often are neglected in history books. There are countless perspectives to choose

from, most beyond the scope of this dissertation. I will highlight a few of those

perspectives as a symbol of the many stories untold stories. I particularly want to

highlight stories of social class from the perspective of those most marginalized: the

working-class, sometimes known as the poor, the paupers, sometimes included with the rest of the laborers, sometimes seen apart. I will highlight race/ethnicity in this overview and issues of gender, focusing on the struggles of woman, especially working-class women. By choosing only a few perspectives, I am unavoidably marginalizing other, often untold, invisible perspectives. I have struggled with this dilemma and can only admit my own limitations of creativity, time and space. Perhaps the symbol of these stories will encourage us to open our ears and our hearts to many other perspectives.

In Chapter 4 I will present my qualitative research design exploring social class issues in family therapy education based on feminist-informed, narrative social constructionist methodology. Methods will be discussed including self-reflexivity and self-of-the-researcher, the research team, focus groups and grounded theory that informed on-going data gathering and analysis. Convenience sampling of both the program sites and the participants will be detailed as well as the ethics that guided the research. The five guiding questions which focused the research will be explored. Data management by the computer program Atlas.ti will be described. Finally, design modifications, limitations of the study and evaluation criteria will be noted

In Chapter 5, I will explore the research findings in regards to social class in general. I will discuss my philosophy of research engagement and then present a brief overview of three aspects of social class—money, power and privilege, and ranking. The taboo against openly discussing social class and the complexity of social class identity will both be explored. Finally, I will examine how class with other interacting social constructs influence resource access and how that shapes our lifestyle and life experience.

In Chapter six, I will discuss how the findings suggest social class presents itself in the profession of family therapy, in the programs and education of family therapists, and the practice of family therapy. Issues that will be explored include family therapy's ranking within the mental health hierarchy and academia, the programs' philosophies of social responsibility, social class discourse in courses and supervision, classism in the programs, therapist and supervisor self issues, implications of professionalization for class identity, and therapy with cross-class clients.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I will explore clinical implications for family therapy education and for the struggles that oppress our clients. I will acknowledge some of the strengths of the programs that provide an important foundation for highlighting social class discourse and I will make recommendations for making social class issues and awareness of classism more central in family therapy education.

Theories about social class have been with us throughout history. In this chapter I will explore three types of theories that have influenced social class. In the first section I will present an overview of the three most familiar social class theorists: Plato who postulated a naturalistic position of social inequality, Karl Marx who theorized an economic position of social inequality, especially based on production, and Max Weber, who focused on a social or lifestyle theory of social class that embraced Marx's ideas but emphasized the importance of social status. In the second section, I will expose the social class myths that inform and reify many of our beliefs about social class. These myths are often contradictory and target marginalized groups to blame for our social inequality. In the third section, I will discuss the influence of feminist-informed, post modern theories that helps problematize some of the assumptions in social class discourse especially as it relates to social class identity.

The Philosophical Inheritance

Plato

Many theorists throughout history have preferred to see social stratification with its resultant social inequality as a natural part of the social order. This naturalistic or functional viewpoint of social class posits that social inequality is biologically innate as well. Because one's inequality is biological, the belief is that a society structured along ways that are responsive to these biological differences will be harmonious as each sector

contributes to the good of society according to their innate abilities. Naturalistic, functional views of social inequality, relegates social class, with its attendant exploitation and human suffering, to secondary concern (Beeghley, 1990).

Plato believed in naturalistic inequality. In his *Republic,* the ideal society has a theoretical stratification of human talent: the gold, the silver, and the iron-brass. For Plato, just as the human being must subjugate "his" soul or personality according to a hierarchy with reason guiding the spirited capacity which in turn guided the appetites, so must society be governed analogously with the gold philosopher-rulers, the silver administrators, and the iron-brass workers (Rossides, 1990). Plato also believed that it was possible for gold parents to have iron-brass children and vice-versa. Thus, while for Plato there was no inheritance of social position, the social roles justified stratification.

There is no discussion of oppression or any type of power analysis in Plato's work. The presumption is that with reason ruling the spirited and appetite-led parts of the personality, understanding will lead to co-operation and harmony both within the person and society. Plato has always been considered an essential component of a classical or liberal education in the West. He reflects the blind, uni-vision of those in power. Herbert Spencer and Francis Galton were two theorists who developed these theories under the rubric of science. Both influenced nineteenth century American thought.

Marx

Karl Marx (1818-1883) and his collaborator, and later editor, Max Engels (1820-1895) were German philosophers who were dismayed by the miserable conditions of urban industrial workers (Rothman, 1978). Marx and Engels were strongly influenced by the German philosopher, Hegel, but disagreed with the idealist idea of Hegel's followers that consciousness, and thus liberation, could be achieved independent of social reality

(Chamberlain, 1999). This led to an end focus on the world of ideas –existentialism – as an escape from reality and responsibility, rather than using these ideas to challenge the existing, de-humanizing social structures and resulting material conditions at a time that humanity cried out for transformation. The resultant alienation is the heart of Marx's philosophy (Chamberlain, 1999).

In Marxism, there is a critical social struggle between two classes of people: the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. Marx recognized a third group, the petty-bourgeoisie, but did not focus as much attention on this group. Marx believed the structure of society determined the options available to people. Thus, if the social structure concentrated the private ownership of the means of production in the hands of a few, these elite will control the production and distribution of resources as well as its cultural values. When Marx looked at social arrangements he asked: "who benefits?" (Beeghley, 1990, p.4).

The bourgeoisie or capitalists are those who have the money to control the physical means of production and so to exercise authority over and supervise others' labor power. This gives them more power and options than those of other classes. It is the modes of production or society's economic systems that determine the power relationships between the classes. The ruling elite has a stake in maintaining this status quo. This interest pervades all institutional arenas, not just economic or political but also social and cultural (Rothman, 1978). For example, the members of the various social classes in the United States today have different income sources, different political resources, different outcomes in the justice system, different access to health care, different school attendance, and different religious affiliations (Beeghley, 1989). Both consciously and

unconsciously, these social realities influence the press, education, health care, political parties, religion and social class discourse (Rothman, 1978).

The producers or proletariat work for the bourgeoisie who exploit them and appropriate the profits from the worker's labor. Labor, unlike other commodities, has the ability "to create new values" (Crompton, 1998, p. 27). This exploitation of the raw material or worker's labor results in different class interests and inevitably leads to class conflict. The main conflict is not over wages per say but the amount of effort produced for a particular wage. Because there is a basic disagreement between capitalist and worker over the value of the worker's labor, the owner must employ supervision and surveillance to force the worker to produce more for the same wage (Wright, 1997).

Marx declared the bourgeoisie produce their own gravediggers (Vanneman & Cannon, 1987). Workers find themselves part of a class "in itself." Most become self-conscious, form a class "of itself" and rise up against their oppressors (Crompton, 1998; Rothman, 1978). In the U.S., while many working-class people resisted, their resistances were met with brutal repression backed by the government. Additionally, as the age of industry has moved to a post-industrial society and the age of information, many laborers became white-collar workers that had previously been considered a middle class position. Thus, many people consider Marx and Engels to be irrelevant to the contemporary American situation. Yet, others contend that the American working-class though constrained, "is neither small nor passive" (Vanneman and Cannon, 1987, p. 4). This has not been recognized because those who write history prefer that resistance be obscured.

The petit bourgeoisie is a class that does not control the means of production. They are self-employed and do not have employees. This group includes small business

owners, merchants, farmers, and artisans. This group has often been considered to be the middle class of contemporary society. Some suggest this middling group also contains the managers or supervisors hired by the capitalist class who do not own the legal means of production but who exercise control over the physical means of production and labor power. Others include self-employed business people with small groups of employees in this social class. Another group is semi-autonomous workers, sometimes employees. This group includes professionals like nurses and therapists who are in the medical-industrial sector. Sometimes called "semi-professionals" by those outside their membership, these workers do not own or control the material means of production (health care) but may have varying degrees of control over their own labor power, including their hourly wage. In some ways, the middle class is a fragmented group made up of those who are not-capitalists and not-laborers, and have little whole identity as a group (Crompton, 1998). To Marx, this group historically did not exploit nor was exploited and had control of their own labor power (Wright, 1997). Marx, however, anticipated that within a capitalist system, the petit bourgeoisie would disappear into the working-class. He did not focus his writings on this class, expecting that once they were part of the working-class, they would revolt along with the proletariat (Rothman, 1978).

Many criticized that Marx and Engels over-generalized their experience and did not anticipate the complexity of society. Others challenge that by focusing more on the economic aspects of the social systems, they did not develop other aspects of society, like religion (Rothman, 1978), the military or interacting aspects of social identity such as gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and age (Crompton, 1998). Marx did not focus on gender. Engel, however, made a distinction between the bourgeoisie family in which

the wife received room and board in exchange for the reproduction of heirs, and the proletarian wife who was also exploited for her work (Crompton, 1998, 93).

Traditional Marxist theory does not elucidate which workers fill the bottom parts of the social hierarchy–the lumpen proletariat. A dual system theory which includes identity theory with a focus on race, gender or ethnicity will clarify who fills the "empty places" (Hartmann cited in Crompton, 1998, p. 93). Marx did not seem to have anticipated the growth of the middle class in many industrial societies. This, however, is on the decline, depending on one's definition of "middle class."

With the embracing of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* by those of various communist and socialist persuasions, there often has been fear to study and write about Marxist thought because of the anti-Communist backlash in many capitalist countries, especially the United States. Over twenty-five years ago, for example, in order to graduate from a Florida public school, the student had to successfully complete a civic course called "Americanism vs. Communism." Perhaps Marx's greatest contribution lies with his attention to how religion has been used by the exploiter to convince many of the exploited that they deserve, and should even be grateful for, their exploitation.

Weber

Max Weber's (1905/1973; 1921/1995) idea of social class is more familiar to Americans than Karl Marx's. Max Weber was respectful of and influenced by Marx. However, he believed that Marx's exclusive focus on the mode of production or economic structure caused him to neglect other aspects of culture that impacted a person's response to their environment. For Weber, social class, or socio-economic status as it is often called in the U.S., comprises several aspects that make up the multi-dimensionality of class. Social class includes three major types of variables: "class

(market factors, technology, income, wealth), status (cultural evaluations expressed in group life, involving such matters as family, religion, race, morality, ethics, consumption, breeding and general style of life), and party (access to the state, ability to create and enforce law)" (Rossides, 1990). Weber believed that people actively behave in ways that contribute to, maintain and are derived from both their "class" (economic interests) and their "status" (values, attitudes) which together form a distinctive "lifestyle" (Beeghley, 1990; Crompton, 1998) and party connection. While people experience social power through both classes and status groups, at times, these might be in conflict with each other (Crompton, 1998). Thus, class structure, class-consciousness, and resulting class action is complicated by one's social status. Not only the mode of production (economic interests) but also the consumption patterns (status groups and lifestyle) must be considered.

Like Marx, Weber basically divided people into two groups: those who had capital and those who contributed labor. Unique to Weber was his focus on "bureaucratic administration" as a result of industrial society (Chamberlain, 1999). This led Weber to understand that there were further breakdowns in these two groups that created differential statuses and communities. For example, within the "capitalists" he differentiated between "*rentiers*" – people who "live off their investments and pursue a non-acquisitive lifestyle" and "*entrepreneurs*" who "own and operate businesses or pursue economic gain in other ways" (Beeghley, 1989, p.8). Labor is subdivided into the "middle class" comprised by those whose services and skills involve mental not manual labor, and those who do manual labor: skilled, unskilled and semiskilled, often referred to as the "working class" (Beegley, 1989). As occupations are supposed to be ranked

according to status or their functional worth to society (McNall, Levine, & Fantasia, 1991), the manual/non-manual divide the working and middle class. Yet, like Marx, there is some disagreement whether his theory addressed the unique position of the middle class as a cohesive group or his emphasis was the variety and fragmentation of the status groups.

One of Weber's strongest contributions was the impact of values and culture on social class (Crompton, 1998). Another Weber contribution was the consequences of ideas or beliefs being used by the dominant social order, regardless of the original intentions (Berger cited in Chamberlain, 1999), an idea often elaborated by French social critic, Michel Foucault (1980). Like Marx, Weber still neglected race, gender and many other social constructs. He did, however, focus on the impact of religion. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber (Weber, 1905/1973) explored the "unintended consequences of Calvinist ideology," especially the Protestant work ethic and it's "affinity" with the 'spirit of capitalism" (Crompton, 1998, p.34). Weber pointed out that the Protestant focus on the rational individual, the importance of asceticism to methodically discipline one's character, and hard work as an outward sign of salvation fit in with the needs of industrial society's "iron cage" to transform the individual into the necessary roles to increase profit (Chamberlain, 1999).

Weber's writings on the inter-relationship between class and status groups led to a more dynamic and complex awareness of social class. He led the way for feminists and others to understand the power of consumption (Crompton, 1998) and reproduction of labor as well as the productive aspects. Weber's work fueled a focus on occupation studies. While theorists like Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb (1972) who wrote *The*

Hidden Injuries of Class had strong agreement with the "relative prestige of different occupations" and "distribution of the material rewards and power attached to the occupations," they also saw this focus on occupations as a "moral referendum" giving the inequality legitimacy (Crompton, 1998).

Erik Olin Wright (1997), a Marxist committed to looking at variations of class structures across capitalist societies, viewed occupations as positions in the technical relations of production while classes are positions of the social relations of production (Crompton, 1998), i.e. those who focus on occupations often did not address issues of exploitation as if these occupations were power-neutral. Wright suggested that the authority boundary of class relations or social mobility was more permeable than the skill boundary, reflecting a more Weberian view of class (Crompton, 1998). This focus on occupations at times led to the idea that social mobility was more possible in the U.S. based on individual achievement. Others saw the occupational focus reflecting the rank-value of these occupations to society without specifying the "society."

Rosemary Crompton (1998) believed that an understanding of *both* Marx and Weber are necessary for a more holistic understanding of social class, because each alone reflects more binary and linear thinking. For example, some see Marx-based theory, as "strong" and structural while Weberian-based is "weak" and active. She did not embrace the dichotomy between class structure vs. action, a class in itself vs. class for itself (Marx), an objective (structure) vs. subjective (meaning) analysis (Braverman, 1974), a focus on class formation vs. class action (Dahrendorf, 1959) or an aggregational vs. relational analysis (Stark cited in Crompton, 1998). She warned about the danger of

picking portions of various theories without understanding the context and theory as a whole.

Pierre Bourdieu (1987) had been influenced by both Weber & Marx and is interested in class formation (Crompton, 1998). He defined class as social relations and recognizes four different kinds of capital: economic, cultural, social, symbolic. Bourdieu understood class as a social construction and class borders as " a flame whose edges are in constant movement" (p.13). More orthodox Marxists, however, believed that Weber's emphasis on status undermines the power of the structures of inequality which are historically present and the resultant, unequal inter-class relationships. The exploitative dynamics that result from these power relationships is what potentially forms class-consciousness (Keat & Urry cited in Crompton, 1998). Yet, these class-based experiences and relationships of domination are mediated historically and culturally, via traditions, values, ideas, and institutions (Thompson, 1995). For Gramsci (1931/2000) "the concept of hegemony, that is the manner in which the active consent of the subordinate classes to their domination is achieved" was paramount. Thus, "winning the struggle of ideas is as important to the 'class struggle' as are economic and political struggles" (Crompton, 1998, p.43).

Myths of Social Class

The struggle of ideas in American thought includes a closer examination of the cultural myths of social class that are prevalent. At least six mutually contradictory social class myths are pervasive in the United States (Mantsios, 1995); see also (Baker, 1996; hooks, 1994; Kliman, 1998; Krugman, 1992; Parker, 1972): (a) We are a classless society; (b) We are a middle class nation; (c) We are a nation of equal opportunity (d) Individual merit determines class status; (e) We are all getting richer; and (f)

Consumption brings happiness. In addition to these general social class myths, there are also cultural myths of social class conflated with race and gender. Colluding with these myths protects Americans from being "disenchanted" with social inequality, our culture and way of life (Lewis, 1978). While these myths are often contradictory, Lewis Lapham (1988, p. 5) observed, Americans "have a genius for holding in our minds innumerable sets of passionately opposed beliefs" and it is the "energy that is generated by these opposites" that "drives the juggernaut of the American enterprise."

Myth one: A classless society

The first myth is that the United States is essentially a classless society. Many aspects of American business and industry labor to "soften the edge of social difference" (DeMott, 1990, p.57)." Sharing similar clothes, food, magazines, jet travel and other trappings of the culture of the "rich and famous," spurs the imagination and blurs the reality that such lifestyles are beyond the reach (DeMott, 1990) of most. This also nurtures the belief that everyone has equal access to resources, what Benjamin DeMott (1990) called in his book *The Imperial Middle* the "omni syndrome "(p. 79). In the omni syndrome, "difference (mere externals) are played down, and the possibility of instant intimacy with people and situations as yet unencountered is played up"(p.92). This creates a top down perspective that bequeaths instant understanding of another's context and situation. We are all the same, we all put our pants on the same way, we are all human. Yet, social classes don't disappear according to Jodie Kliman (1998): Generations of implicit and explicit communication construct each family's narrative about class. They affect how family members define themselves and are defined, what they value, and how they organize daily life and meet its challenges" (p.50).

Americans do recognize social class differences. Lewis Lapham (1988) pointed out the American fascination with the lifestyles of the "rich and famous" such as the focus on the sinking of the *Titanic* with its "equestrian class" (p.199) while two days later, the *Empress of Ireland* sunk with 1,000 passengers and was soon forgotten because of the low social class of its inhabitants. No Hollywood movie had been made focusing on the *Empress*. The plot of the recent movie *The Titanic* focused on social class: the unlikely liaison between Jack, of lower class, and the rich girl. The American fascination with Princess Diana has been a reoccurring theme for the public, in addition to the issues of gender and appearance. In spite of her power, status, and wealth, she fell victim to sexism and exploitation of her beauty. The focus on *People,* celebrities, and other fascinated following of the rich and famous are part of American culture and business.

The heart of class is not about lifestyle but about economic power and the relationships it produces (Zweig, 2000). The working-class have relatively little power over the pace or content of their work, and they are not anyone's boss. They "produce the wealth of nations" but have only their wages given by those who benefit from their labor to buy their daily bread. They make up 60% of the working force, but have very little real power (Zweig, 2000, p. 3). Although not obvious, Americans know in their heart of hearts who holds the power.

> Invisible force fields of power are built into the structures that hold society together, giving it shape, setting the paths for our opportunity and setting the limits as well. We tend to take these contours for granted, internalize them, think of them as the natural order. But when some group of people seriously challenge this kind of power, in politics, in the culture, in assertions of new ways to organize the economy, what has been invisible roars into full view: the 'powers that be' step out to demolish the threat. (Zweig, 2000, p.12)

People interpret the US belief in "classlessness" to mean that there are no distinct classes in the US but rather a continuum of classes. This idea is influenced by Max Weber (1921/1995). Weber focused his concerns on status groupings that can be distinguished by lifestyle (Crompton, 1995; 1998) and are often fluid throughout one's lifetime. Others have used Weber's work to study aggregates of employment or occupations both in Britain and in the United States. While Weber's work contributes an important dimension to the study of class stratification and contributes to the ideal that social class is often relational and fluid, the danger in using his ideas in isolation is that there is no power analysis. A common misuse of Weber's theory in the United States could lead one to believe that there is complete fluidity of social mobility or essentially a classless society.

Myth two: A middle class nation

The second contradictory myth is that the majority of "us" are middle class. Most Americans believe that the middle class is the majority with a small "lower" class and an even smaller upper class. The lower class or poor were seen as "different, damaged, lazy and scary" (Zweig, 2000, p.3). Yet, almost fifty two percent of U.S. Americans consider themselves lower or working-class (Miller & Ferroggiaro, 1995). Describing all Americans as middle class neglects the needs and experiences of the majority, including those that may be exploited for the minority to maintain comfortable lifestyles.

The concept of the "middle class" was first socially constructed in England through the influence of Matthew Arnold according to Cornel West (1995). Arnold's hope in the late 1860's was that the "elevation" of the emerging middle class would be the new force replacing the waning of religion and "play an integrative role in cementing and stabilizing an emerging bourgeois society and imperial state" (p.150). These

"enlightened men," the bearers of "sweetness and light," labored to humanize culture, to de-class society, almost as if "de-clawing" it. By creating the myth that all classes were unified into one, noble class, Arnold believed he was safeguarding society from both the "arrogant aristocracy" and the "barbaric threats" of the explosive lower class (West, 1995, p.151). Thomas Jefferson wrote about the importance of the "middling classes" as "the country's saving force for equilibrium, balancing both the power-hungry rich and the helplessly ignorant poor" (DeMott, 1990, p. 41).

Americans tend to "confuse [middle class] aspiration with condition(Miller & Ferroggiaro, 1995). This masks a "cruel deception" (Parker, 1972, p. 169): that a significant number of Americans do not enjoy the affluence, security and leisure of the "good life" that is enjoyed by those who currently experience themselves as middle class. It also colludes with the myths that invite us to complacency about social inequality.

Some Marxist class theorists believe that the middle class serves capitalist society by buffering class conflict and stabilizing society (Vanneman & Cannon, 1987). The middle class work hard and is taught to play by all the rules. The middle class is caught in the "crossfire" of the interests of the capitalist and working class. The small business owner is caught between the big corporations and the employee. The middle class generally has interests in opposition to the working-class. Although the middle class share with the working-class the desire to change some of the rules that the capitalist class has made in regard to regulations, the middle class are usually defenders of property and prosperity like the ruling class. Traditionally, in the United States and Great Britain, the middle-class tends to vote conservatively, opposing the working-class vote (Argyle, 1994). Working-class people have less faith in "the system" in general and politics in particular

and are likely to believe that there are no significant differences in the political parties (Marshall, et al, study as cited in Argyle, 1994).

The middle class used to be primarily made up of self-employed persons, small business owners, professionals, supervisors and managers. While the numbers of self-employed is shrinking in the United States and Britain, the number of managers and professionals are rapidly growing (Argyle, 1994). Many white collar and service workers enjoy salaries and lifestyles that have been equated with the middle class. Few of these workers actually have any decision making power over their own or other's work and are under the authority of other managers and professionals. Many professionals, including mental health professionals, are seen as semi-professionals (Rossides, 1990) in stratification studies because of status, salaries and authority issues.

Indeed, many middle class people place the line between themselves and the working-class as their own mental labor versus the manual work of blue-collar workers and other laborers. Yet, when the so-called "New Class" of highly educated and technologically sophisticated "knowledge workers (Newman, 1988; Parker, 1972) experienced the tragedy of a pink slip, many like the striking air traffic controllers and corporate middle managers were more likely to experience the bottom drop out of their middle class lifestyle (Newman, 1988). Many of these high status, highly paid, and seemingly minimally supervised workers did not have the financial support networks that helped them to weather this employment crisis. Neither did they have sufficiently powerful corporate contacts to help them secure parallel positions. Only those who had those contacts securely in place in corporate America were able to survive their unemployment with minimum duress.

Myth three: Equal opportunities

In our society there is a prevailing ideology of equal opportunity. The major question, then, is why do racial, ethnic, gender and other inequalities exist? Recently a government-sponsored report came out that showed significant discrepancies in access to health care for African Americans even when controlling for social class. Yet, public mythology does not recognize the structural inequalities, only the "land of opportunity:" Michael Lewis (1978) states that Americans have a sense that society is "benign, offering up opportunities and waiting to be enriched by those who have the will and the capacity to make productive use" (p.8) of these opportuntities.

One of the most enduring American myths is the availability of work for every able-bodied person who wants to work (Katz, 1986/1996). This is America's "sacred natural resource." "The American dream includes a job for everybody who wants to work, it also promises big money to those who try hard enough." (MacLeod, 1980, p.6). Not true contended Barbara Ehrenrich (2001) a social critic who wrote the book *Nickeled and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America* about her experiences going "underground" to work typical "unskilled" jobs such as grill restaurant work, housecleaning, and Walmart retail work in three areas of the country. Ehrenrich, a contributing editor to *Harper's* magazine, took up the challenge in an effort to understand if the one million former welfare recipients who are entering the wage market at the rate of 50,000 a month can make ends meet each month (Ehrenreich, 1999). Many work for less than $7 an hour at jobs that Ehrenreich no longer considered "unskilled" after her own personal experiences.

In 1996, almost eight million people worked two jobs–usually one full time and one part-time, to make ends meet, a strategy the author herself needed to use to pay rent without having major health problems, childcare costs or having the benefit of a reliable

car. According to Ehrenriech (2001), the Economic Policy Institute decided that a yearly income of $30,000 a year constituted a "living" wage for a family of three in the U.S.– one adult and two children. This averages to $14 an hour and includes such "luxuries" as a telephone, health insurance and adequate child care but not much more. Unfortunately, over 60% of the American labor force earn less than that, eking by on what middle-class Americans would consider an unacceptable "salary" and reduction in the quality of life.

Nor do most have equal access to resources, medical care, education, transportation or legal rights. "From cradle to grave, class standing has a significant impact on our chances for survival," including educational attainment, and success (Mantsios, 1995, p.141). School performance and educational attainment correlate strongly with economic class with "enormous class differences in life-styles among the haves, have nots and have little." (Rothenberg, 1995, p.10). According to Richard Parker (1972), "efficiency, not equality, is the god of economics, and efficiency is a jealous god" (p. xx). Big businesses will promote certain government regulations knowing small business can't afford to compete (Zweig, 2000). An example from my extended family includes requiring outrageous bonds in many businesses that small operators cannot pull together.

"The poor" becomes a code word for the unemployed working-class and unemployment is a serious specter haunting many people's lives (Rubin, 1994). Calling them un- or underemployed rather than "the poor" would re-direct the gaze back to society and those who might benefit from the working-class being "unemployed." The "poor" is not a name of any societal group but rather a label imposed by those who define themselves as "not-poor" in all senses of that word (Zweig, 2000). Indeed, the "poor" define themselves by their kinship, rather than their economic status (Jones, 1992).

Myth four: Talent and hard work will be rewarded

Michael Lewis (1978) makes a strong case for what he calls the "individual-as-central sensibility." It was the French Revolution that first focused on the right of the individual to hold positions of leadership and status because of ability rather than inheritance. The mid-nineteenth century rags-to-riches stories encouraged the belief in hard work and talent being rewarded. Yet, according to Stephan Therstrom, these stories served to protect the upper classes that feared the "turbulent passions" of the working-class by socializing workers: into the social order, minimizing discontent and directing it against targets other than society itself. The repetition of success stories would have nurtured the hope that opportunity was just around the corner--if not this week, then next; if not for oneself, then for one's children. Were belief in mobility widespread, the failure to succeed in the competitive race would have seemed proof of individual inadequacy rather than social injustice. Politically explosive resentment would thus have been transformed into guilt and self-depreciation (Rubin, 1976).

Michael Lewis (1978) in *The Myth of Inequality* says deficiency stories are nurtured to explain away the difference between the myth of equal opportunity and the actual lack of societal success. Katherine Newman (1988) in *Falling from Grace* calls this "meritocratic individualism"(p.76). Thus, those who fail to capitalize on opportunity have either character deficiencies or moral deficiencies. The old story re-emerges of the deserving poor (who can't help themselves) or the undeserving poor (who just won't apply themselves). When an individual who had "made it" in this society "falls from grace" (Newman, 1988), there is no one to blame but oneself for the failure to sustain a middle class job and lifestyle.

The same hard work doesn't pay off equally to all. "Individual ability" might actually be code for the power of a particular group. When we look only at income or lifestyle, we see the results of class not the origins! (Zweig, 2000). Women and blacks do not get *as much* payoff from education in regards to status and income as white males (Beeghley, 1989). Working-class people who are usually paid hourly wages, are more vulnerable to the fluctuating economy. Even when they are paid adequate hourly wages, blue-collar workers are less likely to earn that pay check year round than salaried workers (Rubin, 1976). Working-class people suffer from a greatly reduced income compared to others, work longer hours, have fewer protections by unions or governments, have inferior education and inadequate health access and care.

> They had played by rules of the game --rules that promised anyone could make it if they tried hard enough, worked hard enough. So they tried hard, worked hard, obeyed the law, and taught their children the same. In return the "lucky" ones got a collection of goods …. But the good life eluded them; the game was rigged. The goods -- not yet paid for --often brought as many burdens as pleasures. Life was hard ….Thus, they found themselves running -- always running -- to keep from falling by the wayside. (Rubin, 1976, p.4)

Many believe that it is "natural" to have hierarchy and in all social orders; there is always a bottom rung on the ladder. Or that a lack of prosperity is indicative of moral culpability and only the "righteous" will prosper; that to be poor would be a just punishment for laziness and moral deficiency. In either view, neither individuals nor society as a whole has a responsibility to the poor. Others may be overwhelmed by the injustices in societal structures and would prefer to hide or numb themselves from their own helplessness and/or guilt in confronting societal inequality. Preferring not to know, the social classes are segregated in this society, living in separate neighborhoods, going to different schools, religious institutions and even grocery and other stores.

Thus, the "problems" of educational failure or the perceived "proclivity" of crime in others may actually create a group against which the middle class can measure and define themselves, protecting us from the spotlight of failure and indeed, highlighting middle class competence. Thus, deficiency actually reinforces the superiority of the binary opposite group. By marginalizing others, "we" move to a more central location. Those who are "not-poor," "not-educational failures," "not-criminals" are the beneficiaries of the "others's" "problems." Yet, these problems are socially constructed and elevated to make those who've "made it" feel more secure. But somehow, the "fear of falling" still pervades many middle-class and working-class people. Once you've "been there" or known people that you respect who've "been there," you know that disaster might bring you "down" or make you vulnerable once again. For many people in the working-class, this is a position of relative vulnerability, only a couple of paychecks away from losing everything in spite of a lifetime of -long hours and hard work.

Myth five: Social mobility: All getting richer

The fifth prevalent myth is that we are all getting richer. Horatio Alger-like-rags-to-riches stories are part of American cultural myths. As former president Ronald Reagan declared, "What I want to see above all is that this remains a country where someone can always get rich." (Lapham, 1988, p. 9). MacLeod (1980) points to the "dream of riches" as "one of our most popular exports" (p.3).

The history of the United States was built upon the quest of riches. The first explorers were looking for gold and silk routes and venture capitalists of Maryland and Virginia were selling stock options of land to prospective immigrants. The rebellion of American colonies was sparked by taxation, the constitution was written to make the American world safe for commerce, and "liberty' meant for property not for persons (Lapham,

1988). In the U.S., the pursuit of happiness has become the pursuit of wealth: who wants to be a millionaire? Like Alger's characters, American mythology supports the idea that hard work and virtue will eventually pay off (meaning "bring riches") for anyone who works hard enough (MacLeod, 1980). (A more recent cultural twist might be for anyone who works smart enough). A more careful reading of the stories, however, would recall the arrival of a kind, rich stranger who appeared at critical moments to help our heroes.

Yet, the 1990's Census information shows the widest gap between rich and poor since 1947 (Proctor, 1998). The percentage of people who are in the middle class has been shrinking steadily since 1968. Fifty percent of "Americans" hold less than 3.5% of wealth while 70% of the rise in average family income between 1977 and 1989 went to the top 1% of families (Krugman, 1992). After 1980, more families were falling to a lower economic class and fewer are transitioning either to the middle or upper class. Fewer than 1 in five men exceed the economic status of their father (Krugman, 1992).

Eighty-six percent of those with incomes more than $100,000 and some inheritance report that their inheritances contribute the most significant portion of their assets. Daniel Rossides (1990)] pointed out important details about inheritance such as the quantity of income from inherited property sales, the protection of this income from taxation and the tax protection of estate and inheritance wealth. This all encourages intergenerational transmission of wealth. He and others highlighted the often-obscured interconnectedness of the 400 richest individuals and the 100 top corporations, creating a relatively stable owning class. Lester Thurow, dean of the MIT Sloan School of Management examined the 400 richest people.

> The wealthiest families inherit all or a major part of their fortunes, the richest 10% hold 68% of the nation's wealth, and for the first time in 1982

in the nations's history, money earned as capital equaled that earned as wages (Lapham, 1988, p. 22-23).

Michael Zweig (2000) using U.S. Department of Commerce data, shared some information about "the powers that be" in 1995. In regards to businesses: There were 22.5 million businesses. Sixty percent of these had less than $25,000 in gross receipts; 13.3 million took in less than .5% of all business revenue, 70% had no employees. According to the Small Business Administration, any business with less than 500 employees is small business. There were 16,000 big businesses representing .2% of all businesses with employees and .07% of all businesses in country. These elite businesses had most of the employees and the majority of the non-government payroll in the country. The owners and top management of these businesses represent only 2% of the labor force. In agri-business, one third of all farm revenues was earned by 1% of the two million US farms. Only 4% owned half the farmland, at least 2,000 acres (Zweig, 2000).

In regards to manufacturing: less than .5% of the 390,000 U.S. manufacturing enterprises took in 83% of the profit, over 250 million in assets apiece. In 1991, the *Wall Street Journal* detailed these concentrations of market power in each area: the top three soft drink manufacturos, 90%;: the top five producers of music albums, 84%; the top three cigarette companies- 90% ; and the top four telephones companies dominate (Zweig, 2000). The growing market of cellular phones and Internet use may have challenged the latter more recently.

In the world of finance, the twenty-five largest U.S. commercial banks, representing .3% of all commercial banks, control 46.9% of all bank assets. The top five of these twenty five control half of those assets (Zweig, 2000). In overlapping areas, 15% of all the 200,000 Board directors of big corporations, sit on more than one companies board.

These 15 are the "captains of industry" or .2 of 1%, the core of the elite capitalist class (Zweig, 2000). With the Enron scandal in 2002, and with Presidential election of 2000, the public and the media have wanted clarity as to the relationship between the public and private sectors. The reality is, there always has been that linkage.

Recently during the airing of some Ford automobile commercials, Henry Ford's grandson has been boasting of the infamous camping trips the elder Ford hosted for a number of U.S. presidents. In a recent *Nation* (2002) interview, William Conway, director of the Carlyle Group, a financial investment group that boasts several ex-Presidents and ex-administration officials including the George Bush, Sr., laughed and said his group was "no secret" (p.11). Indeed, this group and other groups like it link not only U.S. former heads of state and other ex-public servants, but also heads of states of many other countries including those of the Middle East. It increases profits for investors by using insider information to know where and how governments are going to spend their tax dollars. It also strongly influences public policy, a charge that was unconvincingly denied by the current Bush Administration in the Enron scandal.

While some social mobility for the general population is common in the U.S., it usually is short-distance movements, to the adjoining social class. Mobility among people of color, especially blacks, is substantially lower than those among white men. There are also regional differences, e.g. black & white Southerners have lower levels of upward mobility even when they migrate north, those who move have higher rates of upward mobility than those who do not move, smaller families, especially the first child in a small family or the last child in a large family have more upward mobility (Beeghley, 1989).

Does everyone want to be "upwardly mobile?" Lillian Rubin (1976) suggests there is a rarely examined value judgement in these ideas that "lies deep in American culture" about people who work with their hands:

> The words we unthinkingly use to describe the process of moving through the class structure reinforce that judgement, for we move *up* or *down*, not just through. And when we speak of that movement between classes, we don't speak simply of *going* up or down; instead we *climb* into a higher class or *fall* into a lower one. (pp.8-9)

This was recently illustrated on an Irish genealogy list serve. A woman wrote that she had found in the census records that her grandfather was a "laborer." She was disappointed because she had always proudly thought of him as a fireman. In consulting with family members, she found out that indeed, his preferred identity of himself was as a stone cutter, a skill that he had brought over from the old country. Another list member shared a similar story. When after a decade, these laborers had finished building this particular New England township, their skills were no longer needed in the area. As many now had families and did not want to relocate, they found other work. The second man had become a policeman. While their progeny and society in general may have believed that they had "moved up" in their occupations, both of these men had been more proud of their skilled, manual labor.

Myth six: Consumption brings happiness

It is the illusion of a society that mistakes the acquisition of consumer items with a good life." While adding some pleasure, it also adds burdens and for many "a nagging anxiety from which there is no relief" (Rubin, 1976, p. 205). When de Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1840's, he observed the dread of "sinking" or fear of falling and linked it to the buying of goods beyond one's means (Lapham, 1988, p. 59).

"The Americans," de Tocqueville remarked, "clutch everything but hold nothing fast and lose grip as they hurry after some new delight" (Lapham, 1988, p.60).

In the United States, value is often determined economically. Our sense of self-worth is often dependent on the value others give to our labor, measured in how much they are willing to pay. Occupations are worthy according to the style of acquisition it can provide. Esteem of others is often measured by how much the giver spends on the gift, not on the awareness of the needs of the receiver; the meaning for the giver or the time spent choosing the gift. This is especially true on special occasions such as for weddings, graduations, baby showers, etc. The object is often valued because of its market exchange rate not because of the meaning. While there is often a nod at an object of historical or sentimental value, the popularity of the television traveling antique shows rests more on their inflated appraisals and the gasped responses of the owners. People are valued according to the life-style that they live.

Money buys many things, including life-enhancing experiences and at times life-prolonging possibilities. Money can buy physical freedom and even can impact time. Money can relieve stress and provide needed resources. Money can buy beautiful things. Money can attract admiring people. It can buy momentary pleasure, satisfaction and some security. Money cannot buy lasting happiness, genuine friendship or forever postpone death. Americans desire money as if it holds these powers: to bequeath happiness, ward off evil and ensure security. Because money has been inflated to carry so much meaning, many are filled with emptiness and despair when it fails to fulfill the promised effect (Lapham, 1988). Not having money is blamed for feelings of deprivation, anger and resentment. The "judgment of the bottom line" evaluates

"goodness" (p.215). To Americans, goodness does not rest on mere possession of money but rather on the ability to earn it, traditionally proving one's "manhood" or to spend it, traditionally proving one's "womanhood." More recently in this consumer society, merchandising has targeted the pocketbook of both the employed woman and the consuming "toy" or newest technology-buying man.

The advertising industry feeds on this haunting fear of "perpetual discontent" (Lapham, 1988, p.60). Daily images bombard the senses with messages that encourage and normalize over-consumption, waste and never being satisfied. Habits of extravagance can be imitated by those who desire to acquire more, putting on the habits of mind that perpetuate and defend that wealth. These "feasts of consumption ignite" "frenzied buying in the markets of self-esteem" (Lapham, 1988, p.7) of more, more, more, bigger, newer, and better. The thing consumed is not so important as what the consumption itself represents. Sometimes Americans don't take much pleasure in buying, especially around rituals buying times like Christmas or birthdays when there appears to be joylessness and impatience. Buying is said to cure depression; yet, it seems to cause depression as people struggle and experience enormous stress trying to keep up with the Joneses.

Social rank has always been one of the pricier commodities sold in the great American department store, and the ceaseless revision of what constitutes society gives rise to the great American comedy that has been playing continuous performances since the beginning of the Republic. (Lapham, 1988, p. 71).

For many, money has almost magical or divine power. Especially in crisis, personal or national, we want to believe that buying will keep America afloat and us secure, happy and experiencing pleasure. Rather than love what money can bring, people end up loving

the money as if it embodies all the feelings and pleasures it represents. As Lewis Lapham (1988) quiped in *Money and class in America: Notes and observations on our civil religion*, we elevate it to a "transcendent status" (p.7). Displays of affluence are meant to produce "pious awe" inspiring an "attitude of reverence" while buying momentarily "lifts the spirits and bears witness to the miracle of cash." "Feasts of consumption become rituals of communion" (p. 210). These "visible signs of wealth testify to an inward state of grace" as if money were the "currency of the soul" (p. 214). When Americans do not know how to solve a problem, money is thrown as if it were a votive offering.

In national emergencies such as 9-11, American's first response is to send money. Many are responses of compassion and generosity. Yet, there are people in our own cities and towns who suffer as deeply though perhaps less dramatically on a regular basis and there is a less generous response to these daily tragedies. When disaster strikes "closer to home," involving people that we perceive to be more like us, we are more threatened. And we offer money to protect ourselves. Ironically, by falling back on our habits of throwing money to fix problems, we are threatening our own safety by assuming we can buy our security and refusing to seriously examine the reasons behind the rage, fear and terrorism. We have elevated our lifestyle over our lives. And we do what we know best how to do when we are afraid: we consume.

Myths of Class Interacting with Race and Gender

Social class is interactional with other aspects of one's own identity. African Americans and other people of color have long written about the politics or "metalanguage" of race impacting gender and class (Higginbotham, 1993). The Combahee River Collective (1977/1995), a group of black, socialist, feminist women

wrote about the difficulty of separating " race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously" (p.234). Barbara Smith (1983/1995) wrote about these oppressions as well as heterosexism. Linda Alcoff (1998) talked about "whiteness" being "fractured by class, gender, sex, ethnicity, age and able-bodiedness" and recognizes that privilege may vary with the uniqueness of these intersections. Class also interacts with these domains of influence creating class complexity.

All social class myths are myths of class, race and gender. Usually when the class, gender or race is not specifically mentioned, in this society we assume that these myths are usually constructed around the "unmarked" privileged categories of upper and middle class, white men. Some social class myths, however, are intentionally constructed around the "Other" non-white, non-male and non-middle class. These include at least three myths: (a) the myth of true womanhood, (b) the myth of the traditional family and (c) the myth of the culture of poverty. The first two are often referred to as the domestic code (Sacks, 1984).

Anthropologist Leith Mullings (1997) tackled the issue of societal inequality while deconstructing these other class myths of race and gender. Mullings focused on the conflation of class and culture, a device often used to pathologize those who struggle with structures of inequality and the resulting material conditions. With a triple analysis of the interaction of class, race and gender oppressions, Mullings challenged the lenses of biological, cultural and personal explanations that often ignore structural constraints. These pathologizing lenses emphasize a shifting of:

> responsibility to the victimized populations, [and] are accepted as part of a long history of rationalizing slavery, gender, and race discrimination on

the basis of biological and cultural inferiority. Refined in academic circles and disseminated by the mass media, these notions attempt to blame the victim, and therefore to undermine movement for social change. (p. 64)

Working-class women of color struggle with the oppression of class, race and gender. "Triply oppressed," these "minority" women are also a "triple threat" (p. 65).

Mullings (1997) highlighted the ideology and resulting policies that underlie three constraining cultural myths: the myth of the traditional family, the cult of the " true woman," and the culture of poverty. These myths draw heavily upon "scientific" and cultural discourses "to reproduce, exacerbate, and reinforce" racist, sexist, classist and even heterosexist conformity and "to aggressively reframe and redefine old and new concepts of 'Otherness,'" (p.75). These myths are clung to in fearful anticipation of future societal transformations, i.e., that those who have been considered the paradigms and therefore dominant members of society may no longer be so.

White women who are working-class struggle with poverty, experience classism, sexism and an interaction of classism and racism that punishes them for being white and poor; nonetheless, they also enjoy many aspects of white privilege (Levine, 1997). White-skinned women even those who do not identify as being white, often have access to many opportunities, resources and often better quality of service such as education, housing, employment opportunities, medical care, entertainment, shopping, and other services that women of color are denied. Additionally, these white women also usually have some referential privilege via "kin, social and sexual relationships with white men" (Frank, 1998, p.83) to better housing, wages, and other gender privileges than men enjoy.

In addition, many white working class women also enjoy the "psychological wage of whiteness" that first W.E.B DuBois (1977/1935) and later David Roediger (1991) pointed out, the sense of privilege and superiority of being white (Frank, 1998). Even cultural

groups that have not historically been considered "white" because of their differing religious heritages such as the Jews, Italians and Irish (Ignatiev, 1995), embraced their "not-quite-white" status as a way of increasing their economic opportunities and life-chances, setting them apart from and marking them as "superior" in comparison to African Americans and other people of color.

Myth one: The traditional family

The first myth, the "myth of the traditional family" idealizes as the norm the dominant paradigm or "domestic code" of a breadwinner father who negotiates the public realm and is the recognized head of the family, a supportive wife/housekeeper whose "queendom" is the private sphere of her household and at least two children. This "norm" currently represents only ten percent of the population, and is a relatively recent concept of family.

The domestic code, or cult of domesticity as it is sometimes called, was promoted in the early nineteenth century, codifying earlier gender relations. The domestic code served to distinguish the upper classes from the lower classes, separating the public world of work from the private sphere of home as laborers often worked out of their homes, farming or doing "cottage industries." Men and women of "means" did not labor or sweat. Even opening a door by oneself was considered "work" for the more elite and beneath the dignity of "gentlemen" and "ladies." The only "work" suitable for a mother was supervising the managing of the household and the caring of the children. As women became confined to the private sphere of the home, they became primarily responsible for the raising of moral, responsible children.

Previously, it had been the responsibility of Puritan fathers to instill morals through strict training, disciplining the child's normal inclination towards evil (O'Brien, 2001).

With this new mandate, parenting became the primary charge of women, motherhood was "elevated" and women would be blamed if the child was not socialized nor of the highest character. Mothers in turn put the child's needs above her own, and fulfilling the needs of her household, husband and children, were expected to be her greatest desire. "Women safely protected within the domestic enclave would provide moral and emotional sustenance for their husband and children and thereby participate in creating a more virtuous world" (Hays, 1996, p.30).

The cult of true womanhood separated Africans Americans from Anglo-Europeans. During this time period, black women did not have the same legal protections as white women. They were not "safely protected." Enslaved African women could be legally raped. (All women could be raped by their husbands legally). Even after Emancipation, African American women continued to suffer rape and other forms of sexual abuse without the backup of judicial power, especially when the attacker was white. As Angela Harris argued, "Rape, in this sense, was something that only happened to white women; what happened to black women was simply life" (cited in Rubin, 1994, p. 73).

Mullings (1997) explored some of the problems of this myth including the oppression and invalidation of women as persons in their own right beyond their supportive function. This myth lacks diversity including focusing on the nuclear family and minimizing the importance of extended kinship systems found extensively in African American, minority and other working-class families. It assumes that women have and desire the economic support of a man. It ignores the reality of many women who need to work outside the home for survival reasons. It obscures the dependence of upper class women on working-class domestic help, free, indentured or enslaved, especially among those who

were considered racially inferior. And it denies the right of women to be involved in meaningful employment.

The triple shift

For working-class women of all colors the triple shift (work outside the home, household responsibility, and community work) contributes to higher rates of disease and the significant six-year life expectancy gap between African Americans and European Americans (Mullings, 1997). Many poor and working-class women even experience a "quadruple shift," working more than one paid job to make ends meet. (Ask any older female cashier working at night at a grocery or discount store). The lives of those economically disadvantaged are usually more difficult and complex, requiring more time, energy and money to survive.

Going to a laundromat versus the convenience of home machines, having little time to prepare meals, hounded by bill collectors, and insignificant leisure time add extra burdens for those parents with school age children who already struggle with not having adequate home resources to complete routine school assignments. It is considered essential to have cable TV or at least a TV with good reception that does not depend on the wind or the weather and gets more than two channels. By middle school, reports are expected to be typed, requiring a typewriter or a home computer. Upper math requires a graphing calculator, etc. Transportation problems and limited access to libraries including but not limited to school, public and other educational libraries cause these children to "fail" or do poorly on school assignments. Their reports do not compete well with the scanned color photographs off the net, color graphs and slick binding that many middle and upper class children routinely turn in.

Working-class parents making hourly wages do not have the luxury to take time off to haul children around to complete assignments. Many limited income children arrive on buses that come to school just in time for reduced/free breakfast and leave immediately after school. School libraries are often not open before school or during lunch and open only for a limited time after school. It is often difficult to persuade teachers to issue passes to lower income students, especially of color, even to go to the library. Even with a pass, a non-honors black student or other student of color is more apt to be stopped and questioned by school authorities than white students or those students of color that are recognized to be in "advanced placement" classes.

Many schools now require children to hang photo I.D.'s on lanyards around their necks. It is rarely the non-compliant privileged child who is caught and punished. Why? These are not the children that the administration and powerful parents fear and wish to control. In spite of Columbine High School, our society still chooses to believe that violence is initiated and contained within the poor and working-class. These incidents mirror the discrimination, surveillance and limitation of opportunities that many children of color and lower income children experience on a daily basis in their microcosm of society. These and numerous other examples point to the challenges, time commitment and need for resourcefulness to respond to these inequities on the part of women of color and in the poor and working-classes and their children.

Mullings (1997) highlighted this lack of valuation of women's labor both in the household but especially in the labor market of a capitalistic system.

> In a social system based on the accumulation of profit through the exploitation of labor, the division of labor by gender functions to strengthen those arrangements and to increase profits. Clearly, gender-segregated occupations tend to result in women's receiving less pay for

> the same work than men, (typically 70 cents to the dollar) hence maximizing profits. (p.xx)

This encourages dependency on men instead of welfare. These types of assumptions and generated policies tend to reinforce the traditional family structure of the breadwinner male and the dependent female who is isolated and out of the paid work force. It also privileges heterosexual family structures, ignoring other types of family relationships including lesbian/gay families and other biological and families of choice. It clearly assumes a leadership model of one dominant leader supported by an auxiliary leader. It also encourages overt dependency by subordinates, covert dependency of leaders and does not mention interdependency.

Nuclear vs. extended family

The model of the traditional family suggests women have only one major option: marriage and other forms of dependency on men in order to have a reasonable standard of living. Yet, many African Americans, other people of color as well as working-class families, lesbians, families with differently abled members, etc. have developed other models of extended support networks. The paradigm of the white, middle class has undermined the importance of extended support networks, including family, fictive kin or family of choice, friends, and religious and spiritual communities. This minimizes the power and meaning for many women who generally become the "nodes" who organize and maintain the networks (Mullins, 1997, p. 62).

This is in contrast to white, heterosexual, middle class European-American women, for whom "the cultural emphasis on nuclear family independence constrains middle-class divorced women to rely on their families of origin for help and make it difficult to extend ties to individuals outside this narrow range" (Newman, 1986, p. 202). This makes

heterosexual white middle-class women even more isolated and dependent on their male partners. Even the rich have their extended, paid networks of support.

Breaking up families

A common tactic of any oppressive group is to attack the most fundamental social units of subaltern groups as a means of social control. The myth of the traditional family denies the historical reality of the splitting up the family systems of enslaved Africans as well as other impoverished families. We continue to do so with poor and working-class black and other children under the rubric of protecting these children. Another example is denying lesbian/gay families from adopting or providing foster homes for children who have been abandoned or are unwanted. This is especially outrageous, as there is a desperate need to provide loving homes for older children.

The emphasis of social services is on "protection" by separation rather than actively supporting parents to respond more effectively to their children's needs. The focus is on punishment of the mothers for "failing to protect" or neglecting their children. The underlying societal discourse that social services enact is that the prototypical and preferred American family is white, middle or upper class and heterosexual.

Mullings (1997) emphasized the resourceful and creative adaptation of African American families in spite of racism, classism and sexism. Mullings did not comment on the heterosexism of the myth of the traditional family. She did address the bias towards coupling indirectly by supporting single parent families.

Myth two: True womanhood

The second myth, also part of the domestic code, the "cult of true womanhood," (Welter, 1966) idealized a mythical model that highlights the privileges of white, upper-class and many middle class women in the antebellum era of the nineteenth century.

Four cardinal virtues characterized the "true woman": piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Women who by choice or necessity deviated from these attributes were severely criticized for being unmoral, irresponsible and uncaring. As scientific explanations justified many cultural beliefs, the biology of women was found to be suited to her role and to validate the separate spheres of women and men.

Until late in the twentieth century, women have until been discouraged from pursuing meaningful work outside the home. Middle and upper class women who because of their access to and support of powerful men had little or no economic need to work. These women unlike most African American women and working-class white women, lived the reality of the private sphere of the household, their access to the public sphere to do volunteer work made possible by the labor of servants, maids and formerly, slaves. Mullings (1997) challenged the privilege of these women to present themselves as ideal models of femininity and motherhood.

The matriarch

The majority of African American women have been active workers in the labor market throughout U.S. history. Indeed, many black and other working-class women have never had the luxury to choose not to work for wages outside of their homes. A study centered on the Atlanta workforce (Browne & Kennelly, 1999) explored employers' stereotypes of women, especially black women. It found that most employers thought of women as mothers when most of the female workers did not have children under eighteen. Employers thought of African American rather than white female workers as single mothers, i.e. the female-headed household or matriarch stereotype. Among the African American women who did have children at home, most were *not* single mothers although there were slightly more blacks than white single mothers.

Most employers stereotyped their black female employees as hardworking and desperate for the money, while at the same time negatively interpreting their absenteeism as problematic and indicative of their roles as mothers. They admitted that these women were no more late or absent than all the men on the job whose absenteeism was not considered problematic. And the data indicated that black women, even when they were single mothers, were not more "distracted" by their child care and other domestic responsibilities than white women who were mothers, single or not. Employers also assumed that many black women were dependent on their paycheck but often mixed this with a focus on welfare, despite these women's active participation for many years in the labor market. Black working women suffer from the stereotypes generated by the popular "welfare queen" image, especially during federal budget cutting periods.

The welfare queen

Conservative commentator George Gilder (1995) asserted that "on the whole, white or black, these women [on welfare] are slovenly, incompetent, and sexually promiscuous," (p.25) and see "welfare as promiscuity entitlement" (p. 26). "With young women commanding power over income, sex, and children without marriage, who should marry?" (p. 26). There is a clash of images here regarding women "commanding power" vs. dependent, addictive and powerless, unless the focus is on the women' sexual power versus her political power. Yet, this image, often compacted in the mythical image of the "welfare queen," a single, black, over-sexed woman with multiple children and transient men who frauds the system, is used as the rallying banner to blame working-class women on welfare. As Cassandra Charles (2001, p.10) pointed out,

> The media feeds Americans a relentless diet of rhetoric about welfare
> "cheats" and "queens." The campaign has largely succeeded. Welfare
> today is a term of division and derision. Its recipients are stereotyped as

               lazy and dependent. The larger issues of the persistence of poverty,
               racism, and inequality are ignored. (p.10)

Many believe that being a welfare recipient in the South is the most degrading as

payments are very inadequate and the process of getting welfare very demeaning (Sidel,

1986a). Recently, an ABC news broadcast also highlighted that many states require an

inordinate amount of paperwork (in some states –twenty-four pages!) to even apply for

food stamps, discouraging eligible recipients from applying.

Recent data regarding welfare recipients from the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services (ACF/DHHS, 2001) stated that in March 2001, the estimated number of

families receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) monies was 2.2

million. A previous report stated that the average number of family members were 2.8,

one being the adult (ACF/DHHS, 1998). Only one in ten recipients had over three

children in the household. Black adults comprised 37%, white adults, 36 %, and

Hispanic populations, 20% of the recipients. The average age of these adults was thirty

years old.

Myth three: The culture of poverty

The third myth is the "culture of poverty." This popular myth has been used to

suggest that it is "the poor" especially black and brown women, who are to be blamed for

being mired in poverty and unable to "pull themselves up by their own bootstraps." The

mythic identification of black women with the image of welfare (Higginbotham, 1993) is

the black "welfare queen," the larger numbers of white women on welfare

nonwithstanding. Mullings (1997) challenged this myth on several levels, including the

belief that culture is a fixed set of values, behaviors and traits rather than a dynamic

system responding to a particular material reality often foisted on them by structures of

inequality. Mullings (1997) credited the work of Eleanor Burke Leacock (1971), an anthropologist who striped away the underlying biological essentialism that fuels the ideologies and resulting policy decisions surrounding this myth.

The culture of poverty also intertwines with the other two myths to weave a web that implicates and pathologizes working-class and poor women, especially of color, who lead households. "Elements of strongly held ideologies concerning race, class and gender are reflected in the public discussion of women who head households. Ideologies of race portray them as promiscuous women and inadequate mothers; ideologies of class blame them for their poverty; and ideologies of patriarchy label non-traditional family forms as pathological" (Mullings, 1997, p.94). Female-headed households are seen as the "other" of the patriarchal family just as the underclass is seen as the "other" of the middle-class.

Mullings (1997) talked about the possible need for individual therapy for those persons who because they do not understand the larger structural forces, may turn the aggression inward to the family or the self. Therapy, especially individual therapy, is seen as a correction for "dysfunctional" behavior, resulting in further pathologizing of the individual (and usually the group that person represents). While therapy can be quite liberating for individuals and especially families to deal with the "habits of survival" (Scott, 1988) and internalized oppression, not everyone or every family needs therapy to raise consciousness and externalize the struggle with forces of oppression.

Mullings (1997) at times seemed to essentialize the economic class of all African Americans. While in the minority and constantly facing discrimination and structural inequality based on race, there are some African Americans who enjoy more privileges than those African Americans in the poor or working-classes. "Middle class" or even

"upper class" experience certainly is different for many African Americans than those of white, European descent, e.g. because of the often-stronger connections and responsibilities to extended family. She grouped the experiences of all African Americans, only detailing differences based on gender. This does not adequately acknowledge the increased oppression of those African Americans who experience the added burden of poverty, or to a lesser degree, the working-class.

Children "paying for the sins of the mother"

Children who experience poverty are stigmatized in many ways. Those whose families receive welfare benefits are even more vulnerable. The Personal Responsibility Act 1995 tried to deny AFDC benefits to a child born to a mother younger than 18 or already receiving welfare to decrease the "incentive" to depend on welfare because of illegitimate children. Even though 1996 studies showed only slightly higher birth numbers (2.6) for welfare families vs. (2.1) for non-AFDC families and included children born before the family was receiving welfare. Higher welfare grants are not correlated with increased fertility but rather the predictive variable is not having a high school diplomas (Mills, 1996). The legislation was modified to include mandatory school participation and required residency under parental supervision (with some exceptions) for recipients under 18 years of age.

The Personal Responsibility Act did pass with modifications and a clear message: welfare (i.e. welfare recipients) must be reformed, again focusing responsibility and blame on the victims of rather than the structural inequalities themselves. A new slogan was developed: welfare to work. In 1998, almost 2.9 million families had their assistance eliminated. Only 6.2% were dropped because of "sanctions" – welfare fraud, in spite of all the rhetoric (ACF/DHHS, 1998). The major reason for eliminating services is lack of

employment. The average earnings of those who are employed (and are on welfare) are $553 a month, hardly a livable wage without assistance. This act also denies benefits to any illegal international families, and limits benefits for even those international residents who are legal (ACF/DHHS, 1998).

Addiction

From the time of Roosevelt's description of welfare as a "narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit" (Rank, 1994, p. 19) the linking of welfare and the addiction analogy has been widespread. Reagan talked about the "spider's web of dependence" (p.19). Welfare creates dependency, reformers charge, yet Rank (1994) and others document that most mothers leave the welfare rolls after two years. The not so subtle implication that mothers on welfare are deviant, criminal, and/or powerless to help themselves has practical effects, especially in the alleged necessity to "wean" mothers from welfare. The drug addiction analogy suggests that professionals need to help welfare clients to admit their powerlessness and seek help to break the cycle of welfare (Mills, 1996). Welfare reformers also believe that many welfare recipients have substance addiction problems, hence the inclusion of a section in the new welfare act that denies assistance and benefits to anyone convicted of a felony that included the "possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance" (ACF/DHHS, 2001).

The myths of "the traditional family," "the cult of the true woman," and "the culture of poverty" in the hands of the ruling or dominant groups serve to blame and control these groups, confine and essentialize them to one "culture" and limit their potential for opportunities in the future. Mullings (1997) challenged both those who are members of these non-dominant or subaltern groups and those who experience more privilege, to contest "how knowledge is defined, created and controlled" and work to challenge

injustices in societal structures. Many of us, both privileged and oppressed, would prefer to hide or numb ourselves from our own helplessness and/or guilt in confronting societal inequality. Preferring not to know, we collude with the segregation of our classes and races in this society, living in separate neighborhoods, going to different schools, places of worship and even grocery stores.

Social Class Identity

Identifying one's social class is very complex, as class is relational: to the economic systems within society and one's place within that system and to one's significant others including family of origin, family of choice, friends and work associates. Addressing the issue of complexity, Nancy Lynn Baker (1996) in her article "Class as a construct in a 'classless' society," called for a new language to attend to the multiple meanings of the social construct of class. For example, e.g., the status of one's father or husband may be " conferred" on a woman, while the values of her mother's class or class of origin may conflict with these values. Women, especially mothers are often seen as transmitters and conservers of culture; their function is not to "question and create cultural values" (Schutte, 1998), but rather to maintain and uphold the class and other identities of the dominant man with whom she may be associated. Women who are married and employed may use a combination of their own, their husband's and their father's social class in describing their own class identity (Abbott & Sapsford, 1987). Researchers generally don't ask women how their mother's and sister's social class influences their own class.

Social class is also relational within the particular social class milieu in which one is interacting, for example, friendship grouping, work associates, sibling group, etc. Several authors talked about the interactive influence of one's social class on one's children and vice versa (DeMott, 1990; Newman, 1988). Social class is also "multi-

temporal" (Canclini cited in Schutte, 1998, p.57). One can be brought up in a working-class family whose lives are changed by divorce, health problems, natural disasters, changing one's status to working poor or even abject poverty. One of these members may have the good fortune and support to become an educated professional and might be in a committed relationship with someone from the middle class. While recognizing the complexity of class, I think it is dangerous to pretend that social class is fluid, non-hierarchical or ignore its power dynamics. It spite of the myth of social mobility, most people do not change social classes; at the very most, they move to the adjacent social class, either up or down.

Passing

Some may report a feeling of "passing" as middle class while having the "core" of being working-class (Erkel, 1994). This has been strongly articulated by academics (Dews & Law, 1995; hooks, 2000). As with other cultural groups, many educated African Americans from working-class backgrounds adopt middle class values and teach their children to "pass" to counteract or attempt to minimize racial oppression. Jackie Anderson (1994) explained in, "Personal revelations concerning class." "We lived very much under the gaze of white eyes ready to judge us as unworthy at any moment. There could be no opportunity for 'them' to confirm any of their stereotypes of 'us' through any behavior of ours" (p.399).

My "shanty Irish" grandfather felt the pressure to conform to "lace curtain" behavior when marrying into an old Yankee family and eventually becoming the superintendent of a woolen mill owned by a prestigious Yankee family. "Raising" his status from the grandson of a famine Irish immigrant and the son of a man who made his money turning his front parlor into a pub each night to a respected civic activist, school board member

and financial supporter of the local Catholic parish, my grandfather was known for his strict expectations and his generous pocketbook. I wonder how much of this tremendous drive for excellence was a means of survival and a striving for acceptance and belonging in a historic Yankee village.

Others have written about "passing" as a middle-class professional family therapist (Erkel, 1994) or "coming out of the closet" as do the lesbian writers in *Out of the class closet: Lesbians speak* (Penelope, 1994b), Cherrie Moraga (1983) in *Loving in the War Years*, and Jodie Kadi (1996) in *Thinking class: Sketches of a Cultural Worker*. Many who speak of "passing" are generally white-skinned or lighter skinned, assumed to be middle class by the dominant culture.

Subaltern Identities

Holding these conflicting class identities and their corresponding beliefs in tension is difficult. The most dominant identity and beliefs silence and overshadow the subaltern (Spivak, 1994) or non-dominant identity and values. Rather than embracing the discomfort of two or more different parts of oneself, the dominant part of one's identity usually subjugates or silences the other part. Identity in traditional psychological literature has been portrayed as static and fixed (Mama, 1995). Tracy Robinson (1999) remarked "Within monocultural frameworks, identities are perceived of as representatives of truth, are regarded as normal, and are then thought to be desired by all" (p.75).

A preferred choice would be incommensurability. "Incommensurability" of cultural differences, according to Ofelia Schutte (1998), is that space where the cultures meet and difference is recognized rather than being ignored, colonized, diluted, or hidden. "Cultural alterity requires that one not bypass these experiences or subsume them under

an already familiar category" (p.56). These may include experiences related to class, race, gender, nationality, etc.

The opportunity for dialogue is often ignored as the dominant subjects resist being marginal and taking up less space with their voices (hooks, 2000). Oftentimes, the pain of the dominant subject being challenged becomes the focus of center-stage attention. This avoids the painful and time-consuming process of challenge, dissonance, and change. The holding of mutually irreducible concepts is avoided. Instead, the dominant subject invalidates the communication, values and knowledge of the subaltern subject, reducing this subject to ignorant "Other." This also occurs within oneself.

"The Look" of the "Other"

This is "The Look" of Sartre (cited in Alcoff, 1998) when the culturally dominant subject encounters the gaze of the "Other." To be open and vulnerable to the other's humanity, the gaze must be openly met, pulling the encountered subject to co-inhabit the central space while slightly decentering the dominant subject. To avoid this intimacy, more commonly, the dominant subject either ignores or incorporates the "Other." This cultural appropriation makes the other referential to the dominant subject. Thus, the working-class is only referential to the ruling class or middle class, rather than in itself. The fashion industry has expertise in this area. By colonizing or appropriating a cultural style within the fashion industry, it became a commodity with a time-limited guarantee (hooks, 1995b). The "grunge" style of the nineties is an imitation of an exaggerated perceived image of working-class dress.

By encouraging the masking of the diversity within, the process of colonization is thus internalized and the oppressed may become the internal oppressor. The stranger is now within the self (Kristeva, 1986). Conversation is suppressed, hidden or silenced. The

speaker becomes a fractured subject culturally, emphasizing only the fixed, dominant, socially acceptable, identity (Robinson, 1999). From the perspective of the dominant culture, however, the speaker now becomes an authoritative and active agent (Schutte, 1998). If someone had both working-class and middle class parents, or once was working-class and is a "professional," that person would probably self-identify as middle class as being working-class has lesser status and being middle class is more desired.

Whose Discourse?

Who or what is silent in these discourses? Luce Irigaray (1985) illustrated the power of language reducing complex, multiple differences to binary opposites with one grouping being elevated to the desired, valued and dominant perspective. Class has multiplicity both within each grouping and in the multiplicity of groups. In the U.S., the paradigmatic group is the middle class. The poor as the binary "Other" are considered only in reference to this dominant group. The poor are visible, considered inferior, deficient, either pitied and/or demonized as responsible for their "condition." The "poor," often labeled the "underclass," have little power to name themselves; their often times anguished voices are usually silenced or ignored. Bell hooks (1993) pointed to rap music of the young, Black underclass as one act of resistance. Country music has traditionally been another voiced outlet for Southern white poor and working-class folk. It has often been disdained in this country (Kadi, 1996). The Blues, Gospel and Jazz have all emerged from African American struggles.

Other groupings of working-class people include the working (as in wage-earning) poor who tend to have skills that are not as highly valued or job marketable. The working-class is never mentioned, almost invisible. When visible, they are objectified as the target of jokes, especially when they are seen as Southern, red-necked, blue-collared

workers, or rural "hillbillies." Part of the "myth of the culture of poverty" (Collins, 1998) is if only the persons in these groups would work harder, longer, better, smarter, they, too, would be in the middle class. There is a denial of the structural constraints that limit opportunities for social mobility. There is also an assumption that everyone aspires to adopt all middle class values, even at high personal cost.

The middle-class is the template used to measure persons in other classes. The multiplicity of life experience, income, value and status of persons of all classes are reduced to the "One" (Irigaray, 1985). The middle-class "person" is essentialized to be white, male, Christian, U.S., heterosexual, relatively young, able-bodied and often attractive in a dominant culture sense (Robinson, 1999). Whom does this social class discourse serve? What else might be invisible? Julia Penelope (1994a) editor of *Out of the Class Closet: Lesbians Speak*, suggested in "Class and consciousness":

> Class stratification is a social institution. As such, it serves interrelated functions that maintain the male social order; it limits women's social mobility and perpetuates our dependence on male "benevolence;" it insures that only men have access to economic and political power; it insures that only men have access to resources and that women are only one of the many resources available for male exploitation. (p.31)

Not only are women resources for this exploitation but also non-dominant male groups who have been traditionally exploited or oppressed as women have, e.g. poor, Black, Chicano, gay, etc. Binary language (Collins, 1998) lumped together a wide range of incomes, wealth and social status within the middle class. It obscures the very wealthy who are the most logical binary grouping to all the other groupings put together. By pitting the middle class against the "poor," all the other classes become invisible which prevents coalitions and reduces conflict between the affluent and the other class groups.

CHAPTER 3
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL CLASS

European Emergence of Modern Social Class

While the word "class" was not really in use before its popularization in the eighteenth century, there have always been distinctions of difference, property and status. These differences became more acute as technology emerged and some people had access to tools that made life easier and others didn't. As some people used or harnessed other people's labor to make their own lives easier, distinctions continued to divide people. Throughout our history, the dominant discourses justify and perpetuate these distinctions. The powerful use and reify cultural beliefs to distance from and label those whose labor is exploited, as well as "the deficient" who suffer the consequences of this exploitation.

As therapists, it is important to consider how both our membership in society, and especially our role as mental health professionals, invite us to collude with these dominant discourses. In our desire to use our hard-earned skills to help others, we may blindly succumb to the very ideologies that disempower and pathologize our clients, our students and ourselves. By deconstructing or unpacking these discourses about social class we can become more aware of their constraining power. Otherwise our therapy may become an isomorphic reflection of, rather than working to transform, our culture.

In this chapter, I will be presenting a historical overview of how social class has been constructed, briefly in its English origins and more thoroughly in U.S. history. I am using the word "social class" in two senses. Using Paula Rothenberg's (1995) definition,

social class is the seemingly "natural" hierarchical grouping of peoples that conveys "implicit implications about the moral character and ability" of those who are *not* members of the group used as the "norm" in this ranking. Buddhists, gays, Italians, the blind, whatever grouping are considered "not-normative" in any particular society at a given time in history, are considered "deficient." In addition, those whose labor is most exploited are considered a class apart, "other" from those who use this labor power. These are two distinct although inter-related aspects of social class. To collapse them into one definition is to miss the fluid and complex ways in which differences are used as justification for exploitation. While I am emphasizing the second sense of social class in this definition, I recognize the connections with the more general sense of the term.

Foucault (1965; 1972) critiqued these "dividing practices" (Madigan, 1992) of separating the "abnormal" from the "normal" and how the dominant discourses through religion and science justify and normalize these divisions. The Christian churches used "industry" as one dividing line to justify differing treatment and discrimination. Those who were "industrious" were moral and those who were "idle" were immoral or deficient in other ways. The work ethic became the moral yardstick. Interesting that those with more money and power were not measured nor punished by the same physical yardstick. Especially non- Christians, but even Christians who were outside one's particular grouping were seen as immoral and even evil. Later science was used to service this dividing practice as skin color, brain size, intelligence, sexual organs and appetite and language practices were used to justify discrimination practices. Those who were discriminated against were more vulnerable to exploitation as their choices and freedoms in society were more limited.

My hope is that as therapists and educators recognize and be more conscious of the repeating patterns of power that continue to emerge in society. Throughout history, there are stories of those that dominate and control the social agenda, and those who are more marginalized and oppressed. As therapists, these stories of domination and oppression are familiar to us as they are enacted within families. Familial experiences are often decontextualized as if the family and its members were ahistorical. Powerful social forces supported by a discourse about social class have continued to repeat its message throughout U.S. history. The issues of power and domination in families and how they impact clients and their relationship webs are beginning to be explored and understood. It is equally important to look critically at the web of our histories (and herstories) to begin to understand the complex social forces that have impacted us all, the stories of domination and subjugation. Social class is an often neglected aspect of these social forces. By foregrounding social class and its interaction with race, gender and other social constructs, we will be able to build a solid theory of therapy connected to our familiar and societal stories that our therapy might be more liberatory than oppressive.

This exploration will begin in Europe, especially England, because it has been the dominant influence on the United States. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to portray a more inclusive, global picture of U.S. interactions throughout history, it is important to acknowledge that moving beyond a Eurocentric perspective is essential for embracing a truly global, non-isolationist viewpoint. This is merely a beginning to crack open the door. From England the story will move across the ocean.

Social Stratification

Mayer and Buckley (1955) distinguish between rankings or hierarchy based on the unique, individual differences among individuals and stratification which focus on the

distinctions of rank because of social position. These social positions became institutionalized beyond the charisma or abilities of the particular individual. Often stratification became more pronounced as production increases and there was a surplus of goods. Distinctions in social position were then made between the producers of the goods and the distributors of the surplus. Positions such as chiefs were created to distinguish who distributed the surplus from the producers. Often, these positions were then given the authority to create and regulate social rules regarding surplus and to punish when there was deviation rather than leaving transgression to be sanctioned by supernatural means. More ascribed dress, customs, rituals and rules regarding heterosexual relationships were prevalent in societies with increased stratification (Mayer & Buckley, 1955).

Chiefs were often spiritual leaders who claimed the surplus to be offered to the gods. This eventually led to a priestly class. As surplus and land holdings increased, a warrior or military class was often added to lead the defense of the people. Sometimes in conflict, the priestly and military classes often formed an alliance. Usually there was a chief or king who headed all the groups. Taxation was imposed to provide for these non-productive classes (Fogarty, personal communication, 2002). Writing was developed by the priestly classes partly to keep an accounting of the tax revenues. It later spread to other "accounting" used in the military and administration of the state as well. It required formal study to understand and develop. This "education" came to distinguish the more leisured classes from the manual class (Mayer & Buckley, 1955/1970).

With the growth of towns from trading posts and markets, more stratification developed as merchants controlled the surplus of production, crafts persons provided the

specialized expertise to maintain the physical infrastructure, and indentured servants and slaves (and later, waged laborers) provided the manual labor to accomplish those tasks. More agricultural production was needed to feed these landless inhabitants. This often led to more subjugation of peasant laborers as production needs were increased to feed the townspeople. Tenant farming or serfdom developed as rulers laid claim to larger land holdings, creating a "landless" peasant class. War prisoners who had previously been killed, now were being used as slaves to increase production. Those who committed a social transgression or crime might also be enslaved along with paupers who could not pay their taxes (Mayer & Buckley, 1955).

Social Class in Western Europe

Social class often was passed on to the succeeding generations although intermarriage, war, education and other means of social mobility distinguished many forms of social class from the more rigid caste system of India. In Western Europe, this was true until the decline of the Roman Empire, the invasion of the Germanic tribes and the rise of Islam (Mayer & Buckley, 1955). With the resulting decline of towns and the merchant class, possession of land became the source of power and status. In the developing feudal society, three social classes or estates emerged: the nobility, the clergy and the peasantry. The nobility owned most of the land, defended the country through its military power, and had judicial authority. The clergy, also landowners, were the spiritual and educated leaders as well as providing many administrative functions. The peasants were those who worked the lands and produced wealth.

Eventually, entrance to the nobility was by birth or conferred by kings and many noble sub-rankings developed (Mayer & Buckley, 1955/1970). The ecclesial class or clergy also had a complex hierarchy of leadership and power. Those positions of greater

prestige (popes, cardinals, bishops, etc.) was often occupied by the younger sons of the nobles (Russell, 1994). These clergy had immense land holdings with their own serfs. The local parish priest might come from peasant stock and was often a tenant of the local bishop. A parish priest or a priest from an independent order of priests with unusual talents might rise in the ranks of the church. The peasantry also had its divisions: from freemen whose persons were not bought but who placed their lands under the protection of a noble, to semi-free *villeins* and finally, serfs whose person was also the property of the noble or clergy. Eventually, slavery *per se* died out in Europe as slaves resisted and required too much supervision. Slaves were replaced by indentured servants or serfs that lived on the land and who still produced for their masters or lords but required less oversight because of a system of stiff legal sanctions, including the death penalty (Mayer & Buckley, 1955/1970).

English Influence

The English were the first explorers whose primary purpose was to settle in the "New World." To that end, English settlers brought their entire households, rather than intermarrying with indigenous populations. Unlike the French to the North and the Spanish to the South, the English lived separately from the indigenous and African slave populations and discouraged intermarriage although there were liaisons and sexual exploitation (Russell, 1994).

In Chaim Waxman's (1977) *The stigma of poverty*, and in Joe Feagin's (1975) *Subordinating the poor: Welfare and American beliefs*, U.S. beliefs about social class, poverty and the poor are traced to a dominant European-American heritage, especially the influence of English law and 14th Century England. Prior to this time in Europe, poverty was the concern of the Christian church, the Roman Catholic Church in

particular. In early Christian writings the poor were deemed of the highest moral status while the rich were of lesser spiritual status. In medieval Christianity, charity was a right of the poor and an important duty of the affluent as it still is in Islam and Hindu. It was considered to be an honor to be a patron of the spiritually enlightened pilgrim/beggar. It also could improve one's chance for entrance into the "pearly gates" after death.

Reform

Religious reform. By the mid 16th century in England, Protestantism was replacing Roman Catholicism and the Puritan movement was growing stronger. With the Protestant Reformation, internal struggles in the churches resulted in a hierarchy in the types of poverty and a hostile attitude toward begging and pauperism (Walter, 1970, cited in Waxman). The Protestant emphasis on the individual and the work ethic discouraged institutional charity (Fullerton, 1973; Weber, 1905/1973). Calvinist doctrine saw poverty as a divine consequence for sloth and immorality. Work was a major defense against "sinful temptations of the flesh." Work was to glorify God, and God, therefore, ordained wealth. This emerged as a dominant Western belief (Feagin, 1975).

Feudal society and agrarian reform. This change of "charitable" attitude is linked with the decline of feudalism (De Schweintz, 1961, cited in Waxman, 1977). Those who were in power in Parliament enacted a series of laws called the enclosure laws that allowed landowners to fence in their own property as well as lands that had been traditionally held communally. Small landowners were pressured off the land or bought. New laws limited their grazing rights and opportunities to find work to supplement subsistence farming were diminished. As more production-intensive agricultural methods were introduced, fewer farm laborers were needed for the harvest and other work. Farm laborers were paid in wages rather than part of a reciprocal arrangement of work for

housing. Agrarian reorganization and capitalism (Rigby, 1995) deprived people of land and work. Many were homeless and migrated into the towns in search of shelter and wage earning jobs.

Migration to towns & wage labor. The development of manufacturing created a need for a large group of workers in more centralized, less rural, environments. Wages were a symbol of freedom from serfdom. While crafts persons and merchants had slowly evolved in the town economies in medieval England, suddenly large groups of peasants found themselves without land or work and crowded into town becoming cities. While crafts persons and their families had always produced their goods within their homes, people now turned to manufacturing in factories to survive. With a surplus of labor, wages were very low, especially for women and children who previously had contributed more significantly to family survival (Katz, 1986/1996; Rigby, 1995). Fortunes of health or even job related disability caused suffering without the support of a patron or master, or clusters of relations. People in desperation turned to mendicancy and theft as a fear of social unrest developed among the affluent. The Black Death (1349+) also created havoc (Rigby, 1995; Waxman, 1977) because strangers were feared as they could potentially spread the disease. Poverty and idleness became moral issues to legitimize more punitive measures as a means of "purifying" the immorality of the poor.

The poor

In 1560 the first law that taxed householders to benefit the poor was created (Feagin, 1975). This further alienated those small householders who already felt the burden of the taxation. This focused their anger on the poor. From 1572 until 1601, after severe economic depression resulting from several years of severe crop failures and extensive debates in Parliament regarding poverty and relief, a series of so called Elizabethan Poor

Laws and revisions were passed. These "Poor Laws" outlined the community's responsibility for their own poor and established the almshouse for some relief of poverty. Poor people were expected to live within their own districts. As people migrated looking for work, this proved impractical to enforce (Katz, 1986/1996).

In 1662, the Law of Settlement passed which empowered authorities to forcibly return the poor to their birthplace. This lack of freedom was a throwback to feudal days (de Schweinitz, 1961, cited in Waxman, 1977). Workhouses were introduced in the 1700's to force those who received aid to live and work on the premises. Rules were very rigid and punitive. To escape the workhouse, accepting low wage work became the norm. Many localities forced the poor to wear pauper's badges on their sleeves.

The eighteenth century produced at least two schools of economic and political thought with profound effects on attitudes towards the poor Waxman (1977). One came from the ideas of Alfred Smith, the father of modern economics. Another came from a book called: *A dissertation on the poor laws: By a well-wisher of mankind* and became known as Social Darwinism (cited in Waxman, 1977). This propagated the idea that only the fittest in society should survive; the poor being the weakest, would be the first to die.

The reform of the Poor Laws of 1834 resulted in the doctrine of "less eligibility." To create an incentive to pressure those who receive aid to work, their assistance was lower than wages gibe to the lowest paid worker. It conveniently provided many employers with a desperate and readily available supply of cheap labor. The new workhouses created by these laws were like prisons: people lost their civil rights, the family was separated, people wore distinctive clothing and did menial jobs. The blame for poverty was placed squarely on the shoulders of the individual paupers.

By the sixteenth century, the English monarchy was very concerned with maintaining public order as fears increased about maintaining security against the poor and other disgruntled groups. If desperate, the poor might rebel. Societal revolt might result as "unrelieved and uncontrolled poverty was the most fertile breeding ground for local disorders which might become a kind of social contagion flaming across the whole realm" (Jordan, 1959, cited in Waxman, 1977, p.75). In 1531, the government under Henry VIII intervened in order to quell unrest, establishing criteria to distinguish between "vagrants" and "impotent poor" later to be called the undeserving and deserving poor. The former could be whipped, fined or even imprisoned; the latter was authorized to beg (Feagin, 1975). Creating this division encouraged animosity among the poor and resulted in the poor internalizing this stigma of "poverty." It discouraged solidarity across classes.

American Emergence of Social Class in the Antebellum Period

Poor relief policy in England significantly influenced American practice during the colonial and post-colonial period as many of these English beliefs were transplanted in American soil. Industry and thrift were seen as virtues and the calling to hard work was an antidote to poverty (Feagin, 1975). Several English precedents were accepted: relief was a local, kin and public responsibility. If kin were unable to meet the needs of the poor, then local parishes and parishioners had a responsibility to give "outdoor relief" to families and at times, to take in young children as apprentices who were then trained and cared for in their homes (Katz, 1986/1996). Poor Laws established criteria as to who should be helped - neighbors yes, strangers, no. Until late in the nineteenth century, most people lived within a reasonable distance and walked to work. The local community disliked and had no responsibility for strangers, especially poor strangers.

Investors, Settlers, Servants and Slaves

The circumstances of settling in the "New World" quickly put its mark on the young colony. Small settlements of people fleeing religious persecution from the Anglicans grew up in the Northeast. The original group of settlers, the Pilgrims, had been blown off course as they set sail for the first English colony in Jamestown, Virginia. The Pilgrims were joined later by the Puritans also seeing religious freedom. Those in the mid-South near Virginia were settlers seeking their fortune, often working for English investors interested in the colony's riches. Those in both groups found the clearing of land and planting of crops an arduous task, beyond what they had been accustomed to in Europe on lands long since cleared (Jones, 1998).

In the Northeast's rocky terrain, small farms located around a church and its town square were the norm. Farming, fishing and trapping were people's livelihood. Slowly, homebound or cottage industries grew and fishing for export increased. Shipbuilding became one of the more lucrative exports with forests of raw material available and empty holds could be packed with the raw materials that Europe craved. In the Northeast, the Puritan workers worked conscientiously without high wages. The Protestant work ethic "produced over-producers and under-consumers" (Russell, 1996, p.30). According to Max Weber (1905): The great innovation of Protestantism was that it developed a way of culturally seeing the world in which economic and religious attainment did not contradict each other. One could be a successful capitalist without feeling religiously negligent. (Russell, 1996, p.3).

In Virginia and surrounding colonies, corn for consumption and tobacco for export quickly became the main crops, both acquired and taught with Native people's help. Tobacco brought a high price because of its rarity and its immoral mystique (Zinn, 1980).

Tobacco was a labor-intensive crop and there was a shortage of labor. All available hands were needed for survival. Soldiers and sailors were pressed into service for clearing farmland and farmers were expected to carry a gun and do guard duty to protect the settlement from both actual and imagined threat from indigenous people (Jones, 1998). Neither soldier nor farmer worked willingly out of their accustomed roles. The sheer exhaustion resulting from the effort to "subdue the wilderness" while struggling to grow enough food to survive and protect the settlement contributed to the high mortality rate.

The English could have learned more from Native peoples but preferred an isolationist stance. Many English tried to press the indigenous into service to little avail except as hunters and guides. Outnumbered, the English focused on using guns, axes, hoes and force to push the indigenous off their lands. Tobacco destroyed the latter's habitat threatening their way of life as trees were cleared, fertile soil exhausted and more settlers pushed the dwellings further from the coast.

There were very few women among the first settlers nor younger children as the latter often taxed scarce resources without reciprocal production. Over half the white population who immigrated to the English colonies were indentured servants, either to escape prison in Europe or in order to secure their passage (Gordon, 1998). England was eager to get rid of these undesirables (Zinn, 1980). These "servants" were the primary labor force as English gentlemen were unaccustomed to taxing, physical labor. By 1619 the first twenty Africans were forcibly brought by the Dutch to Jamestown to labor as slaves on the tobacco plantations (Russell, 1994). Slave and indentured labor was used to produce cash crops for market consumption. Slavery in particular fed capitalism while

the more feudal types of labor in the Northern French and Southern Spanish colonies were not as compatible with capitalism (Russell, 1994).

Distinctions between African slaves and white indentured servants were more blurred in the early years of the colony when the latter's indenture could be arbitrarily prolonged because of alleged servant transgressions. Servants could be sold at will. Surveillance was a constant concern as disgruntled slave and servant did not take willingly to the arduous labor of cultivating tobacco and clearing more forests. As a few servants finished their indenture to become poor though independent yeoman farmers or frontiersmen, laws were enacted to punish consenting sexual relations or intermarriage between poor whites and Africans or poor whites and Natives, in an attempt to keep them apart. Children from these unions were declared illegitimate to keep them in the slave community and keep whites "pure" (Zinn, 1980). Many indentured whites and enslaved Africans conspired to rebel and/or runaway from their white masters. Those who were caught were usually executed.

Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 was an anti-aristocratic and ant-Native war in Virginia. Bacon and other frontier families were given land west of Jamestown. These lands and settlers were used as a buffer between the elites on the Virginia coast and the native peoples and were the sites of many armed conflicts between the settlers and the natives on whose land they encroached. As one ruling class leader remarked about the purpose of a similar settlement area after the Revolutionary war "The first target of the Indian's hatchet was the frontiersman's skull"(Zinn, 1980, p.87). In a particularly severe year when famine was most felt by the lower classes and taxes were not reduced. Settlers, slaves and servants rose up against the Jamestown leaders when they decreed these

"buffers" should not fight against the indigenous population. Their rebellion was crushed and many participants were executed or returned to their masters.

Revolution and the Lower Classes

As the colonies grew, went to war against England, and later, became a nation, class continued to be an issue. "Gentlemen" who did fight on either side were given uniforms, paid salaries, proper food and housing, and medical care. Those of the upper class who fought for and stayed for the duration of the war were paid a half salary for life (Zinn, 1980). The elite had slaves and servants who continued crop production, the latter's back-breaking labor providing profits to fuel the revolution. The middle classes often fought in the war but for short periods of time. They were expected to buy their own uniforms and most provided their own food. Those who worked as aides to officers had access to better lodging, food and were paid.

The "lower classes" in contrast fought in miserable conditions without adequate food, decent shelter, or proper medical care. Those who had land often lost their crops as they were pressed into service either by involuntary conscription or by being paid to "stand in" for privileged neighbors. Between one-fifth and one-third of the population was against the war and many of the lower classes were not interested in the cause. Alexander Hamilton, Washington's aide wrote: "…our countrymen have all the folly of the ass and all the passiveness of the sheep…. They are determined not to be free" (cited in Zinn, 1980, p. 76). Pay for the foot soldier was less than one-tenth of that for an officer and was paid in almost worthless Continental monies. Mutiny among the ranks was common in spite of Washington execution of "deserters" who left the militia because of life-threatening conditions for themselves and their families while elite merchants made more fortunes during the war. As one of the elite complained, "There is a mean, low dirty envy

which creeps thro all ranks and cannot suffer a man of fortune…" (Zinn, 1980, p. 82). In an attempt for more co-operation, land for tenant whites and freedom for enslaved blacks were proposed in return for military service (Zinn, 1980). Both offers were initially rejected although later in the war, some Northern blacks did fight in return for their freedom while the Southern elite refused to arm their slaves. Many blacks fled with the British.

A few middling and fewer lower class whites did rise in the ranks, gaining prestige and new status, they were the exceptions, not the rule. Ironically, the War was not fought for the commoner who filled the bulk of the military units, but for the white, propertied colonial ruling class whose livelihoods were impacted by increased English taxation. As in all wars, the poor suffered the most as battles were fought on their lands, their men-folk became the fodder for bullets, and their families were left alone to struggle with most of the consequences of war years beyond the cease fire.

By the early nineteenth century, the growing poor were given forms of "outdoor relief." Outdoor relief was some form of assistance given directly to the family. Those who could not survive were sold off to local farmers who paid for their indenture. If they strangers, they were banished from the local area. There were a few almshouses for widows and the mentally ill that were unable to be cared for by family members. Settlement disputes often erupted between townships that refused responsibility for any particular pauper. These legal disputes and transportation costs far exceeded monies that were actually spent on relief.

Poor families were broken up as both adults and children were auctioned off to the highest bidder as indentured servants. Families who "allowed" their kin to be taken care

of by others were perceived as irresponsible. Apprenticeships for boys and domestic service for girls as young as eight were common as a way of providing for children and teaching a livelihood. These were often under horrible conditions as food, clothing and housing was often grossly inadequate and abuse was common. It gave poor families, however, a way to survive.

The mechanization of agriculture in the first half of the 19th century along with the increased population, declining productivity of the land, as well as the usual crop failures contributed to increasing rates of unemployment (Katz, 1986/1996) for poor whites and the few freed blacks. Being unemployed led to transience as people swarmed to other locations in search of employment. The fear of these transients led local people to want to regulate these vagrants. As people continued in increasing numbers to migrate, looking for work, this proved impractical to enforce. Tax money was used to buy relief supplies such as food, clothing or coal. Taxpayers wanted to distinguish between locals and strangers as well as attempt a distinction between rogues, vagabonds and healthy beggars. This later was changed to an exclusion of all able-bodied men (Katz, 1989).

The alarming growth in the number of paupers swelled by immigration and unemployment caused by a depressed manufacturing sector led to the burgeoning growth of cities and transients. This frightened the respectable citizenry. One official complained about the "burden" of immigrants: "the maintenance of the host of worthless foreigners, disgorged upon our shores" were spared "the just consequences of their idleness" (Katz, 1986/1996, p. 17). While the majority of relief recipients were not able-bodied, it was feared that assistance would nonetheless influence all working-class people

to shun work, becoming a monster whose tentacles threatened "productivity, morality and the tax rate" (Katz, 1986/1996, p.43) and altering the foundations of moral civilization.

The idea of being poor *per se* held no stigma but being a pauper did because it signified someone that was receiving relief. In New Hampshire in1834, preaching at the opening of a chapel poorhouse, the Rev. Charles Burroughs declared:

> Pauperism is the consequence of willful error, of shameful indolence, of vicious habits. It is a misery of human creation, the pernicious work of man, the lamentable consequences of bad principles and morals."(Katz, 1986/1996, p. 13)

More to the point, Burroughs warned that the dole could "teach the poor that relief was a right, promoted militancy and eroded the deference that should govern class relations" (Cited in Katz, 1986/1996, p.18). Burroughs distinguished between the impotent, deserving poor caught in temporary poverty and misfortune and the able, undeserving and immoral poor. The former deserved charity and the latter, punishment.

The Poor House

By the 1850s, social institutions were created to reform the character of "pathological" dependence (Katz, 1986/1996, p.11) of those who sought outdoor relief or family assistance as opposed to aid that was dispensed within an institution. Dependence changed from a social and economic category in pre-industrial society to a moral and psychological category in postindustrial society (Mills, 1996). Religious zealots rushed to stamp out the sins of intemperance, considered the primary cause of pauperism, and teach the virtue of steady labor (Katz, 1986/1996).

Wage earning workers were still new in the early nineteenth century and "wages, time and work discipline were at the heart of conflicts between masters and workers" (Katz, 1986/1996, p. 13). Crafts persons set their own time schedules while manufacturers

responded to the capitalist competition by trying to keep up with market demands. This required dependable, orderly and compliant workers who would respond to the work as available. As long as societal reformers focused on the extreme dependency needs of their potential workers, they could deflect reflection on their own shirking of responsibility to the needs of underpaid laborers while reaping the benefits.

The poor house was seen both as a workhouse and a house of correction; it protected the community from needy strangers who might dare enter. Incarceration became a primary solution for the poor, hard labor and oppressive conditions were the deterrents. Critical of dismal conditions, the poor at times found support among local merchants, lawyers, constables, overseers of the poor and local politicians who benefited from the system of outdoor relief in a complex interchange of cash, welfare and votes. Rather than being cut out as middle persons, these local townspeople who benefited from the generated work or dollars would support minor reforms.

Reformers focused on the disciplining of character that would be inculcated in the poor house, especially against intemperance and dependence, both considered to be the causes of poverty. Children would be taught the virtues of industry through education, and the infirm, aged and mentally ill could be better attended.

> In essence, social policy advocated shutting up the old and sick away from their friends and relatives to deter the working class from seeking poor-relief. In this way, fear of the poorhouse became the key to sustaining the work ethic in nineteenth-century America (Katz, 1986/1996, p.25).

Most lodgers of poor houses were in between jobs and were part of the laboring class most of their lives. One source of rural poverty was the mechanization of agriculture along with the increased population and declining productivity of the land, as well as the usual crop failures (Katz, 1986/1996). Unlike agricultural work on one's own farm, the

seasonality of wage-earned work of both agricultural and factory worker operated on an as needed basis, creating a crisis for wage earners who found themselves unemployed during the winter or during manufacturing slowdowns. Most were literate and had some schooling. A high percentage was essentially "unskilled," that is to say, that they had skills that were not in high labor demand. Many were caught in the "transition from agriculture to industry" (Katz, 1986/1996, p.92). Some of the "inmates" were lower clerical or service workers. Many were women who had not previously received public assistance nor worked for wages. Even wage labor in the mills or as a domestic was insufficient for single mother, especially with young children.

One of the more remarkable trends was the number of elderly men, less likely to be cared of by their children. Among older inmates being single or not having children made dependency more likely as there were fewer kin and no grown children to offer shelter. Death and injury due to industrial accidents, handicaps, persistent physical and mental illness, rampant malnutrition, inadequate sanitary conditions, no medical care, advanced age and pregnancy for unmarried women all contributed to a greater vulnerability to the need for public shelter. Resources from relatives became scarcer, especially with the myriad of depressions that dotted the nineteenth century.

The poor houses were very expensive alternatives to giving aid to people in their own homes. Often administered with inadequate funds, poor houses were degrading, filthy and dangerous, especially for vulnerable populations. It was punishment rather than economics that were paramount in the hearts of reformers. The poor house system failed to "reform" those asking for relief. Labor such as breaking stone was meaningless. Wage

earning work was not facilitated and able bodies left the poor house when seasonal employment opportunities surfaced.

For all but the most vulnerable and elderly, the poor house was but a temporary refuge during harsh seasons, unemployment and family emergencies, not a permanent home. Crises were a regular part of the rhythm of working -class life, making the distinction between worthy and unworthy poor difficult. Merchants who extended credit often helped families to survive between crises. Those families with the most able-bodied members were most likely able to avoid the poor house. Inhumane, miserable conditions did not evoke compassion nor soften the rhetoric about the immorality of the poor. Public opinion hardened, justifying mean-spirited behavior and policy towards the poor. Lack of assistance left the poor little choice but to provide others with a cheap supply of labor. Chronic poverty, even with employment, became "chiseled" into the American fabric (Katz, 1989, p.14).

Immigration and the Racialization of Social Class

As the ruling classes Northern Whigs continued to industrialize and look for expansion of for industrial markets, the Democratic elites in the South began to look for more productive, agricultural land and potential slave-holding territories (Zinn, 1980). By the 1830's resistance from Native Populations had been reduced East of the Mississippi. Texas and other Mexican lands west were viewed as desirable for southern and western expansion. Anglos began to push into northern Texas and contest newly independent's Mexico's authority in the region (Russell, 1994). Anglo settlers turned to the U.S. for armed support.

The Mexican- American War

The Mexican-American war was initiated in 1846 by the American military with the support of President Polk. It was an unpopular war among the nativist and immigrant working poor people who were conscripted, kidnapped, and often not paid even as volunteers. Many who were later paid in land titles, desperate to feed their families, sold it cheaply to land speculators. Many laborers, especially Catholic Irish in New York and New England staged anti-war demonstrations. Large numbers of U.S. soldiers deserted or died of disease. One mainly Irish unit deserted and fought against the Americans before they were captured and executed (Russell, 1994). Those who served in the U.S. army participated in bloody battles against the Mexican army and committed horrible, racist atrocities against civilians and destruction of property. Many Mexican women and young girls were brutally raped; men and boys were mutilated.

By 1848, the U.S. emerged victorious and acquired the expected lands of northern Mexico, the present New Mexico, Arizona, California, and southern Texas as well as other territory as war prizes. The U.S. bought more land at an exorbitant price which many felt was "conscience money" (Gordon, 1998, p.152). This added significant wealth and economic power to the US as a result of the resources (oil, gold, copper, cattle and California's agriculture) that the South West provided (Russell, 1994).

Many Anglos moved into the area, pressuring both the Mexican and Native peoples to Americanize. The Catholic Church encouraged families to co-operate with the Anglos, rather than rebel, cutting a vital link for Mexican families with their heritage (Blea, 1992). Although many Mexican and Native-American families did rebel in various ways, because of their own racial, class and religious divisions they often did not co-operate with one another. Many were caught, tried in American courts (Dill, 1994) and hanged

for treason (Blea, 1992). Native Americans in the region were forcibly removed from their lands and many died of starvation and disease.

Mexican-American families

An important cultural resource, the Mexican family was an extended family with its own traditional gender roles. These families primarily worked their own small lands and lived on that subsistence. The first threat to these families after the War was not being able to legally document ownership of their lands, resulting in their loss. Secondly, with the intrusion of Anglos into the area, impacting the local economy, wage labor became more necessary for survival. Men needed to migrate to temporary, transient jobs in order to supplement or even provide a primary source of income for their families. Many women became heads of households both with the temporary absence of their partners and older sons as well as increases of deaths associated with hazardous wage work such as railroading, mining and lumbering.

Initially, these disruptions were offset by the extended family and community connections as Mexican families often lived in close proximity to one another. Many families were connected across class and racial lines to influential members of the community through the system of *compadrazco* or godparenting (Dill, 1994) which provided financial and other support for children through Catholic religious initiation ceremonies such as baptism and confirmation. As more families lost their ranch and farmlands, and increased periods of paternal absence became the norm, more families were forced to move to the employment camps. While initially opposed to families being brought into these camps, employers eventually realized it contributed to a more stable work force. Camp migration often led to disruption of cultural patterns of gendered labor divisions as well as extended family and community networks. Yet, families were better

able to survive the low wages with multiple members of the family providing wage labor as well as staying more connected to the nuclear male family members.

Women's roles in families

Women were very important to the family, providing both productive and reproductive labor – the care-giving function sustaining the family such as cooking, marketing, cleaning, caring for sick members, sewing, etc, as well as procreating. They also were pivotal in passing on cultural traditions such as food, relationships to family members, religious traditions, traditional healing arts, family rituals, etc. The Spanish language provided support and connection to kinship and traditions. When public schooling systemically attempted to eliminate this vital force, parents repeatedly attempted to create bi-lingual schooling with limited success (Dill, 1994). Many children were known by their Anglo names in school and future generations named their children more "American" names. This breaking down of the linguistic link loosened kinship connections and transmission of cultural values. This breakdown may also have impacted literacy rates and opportunities for upward mobility (Dill, 1994).

It spite of women's central place in the family, their power decreased with encroachment of Anglo laws and values as these eroded women's traditional property rights. Many legal documents demonstrate the rights of women in ownership of land, livestock, farm implements, jewelry, guns, musical instruments and clothing (Blea, 1992). Women often owed property themselves or jointly, and even in the latter case, were often more instrumental in deciding inheritance. This included passing on of their own property to children and maternal kin rather than through the husband as in Anglo law (Dill, 1994). Women's public presence as witnesses in court and other legal matters also decreased during Americanization (Blea, 1992).

As Anglos and immigrants migrated to the area, various ethnic groups were brought in to compete for jobs and fragment labor organizing resulting in depression of wages. Each group settled for dangerous jobs, inhumane housing conditions and lack of medical care in order to gain employment. Many Mexican-Americans were trapped in low-status positions due to racial, cultural and religious discrimination.

Civil War

Between April, 1861, and April, 1865, 600,000 died in a civil war between the states (Zinn, 1980). American schoolchildren are taught the primary reason was freedom – to release the bondage of black slaves. Others acknowledge that the clash between the North and South was not over slavery as a moral institution. Most northerners did not care enough about slavery to make the sacrifice of war. It was not a clash of peoples (most northern whites were not economically favored, not politically powerful; most southern whites were poor farmers, not decision makers) but elites. The northern elite wanted economic expansion- free land, free labor, a free market, a high protective tariff for manufacturers, a bank of the United States (Zinn, 1980, p. 184).

The wealthy from the manufacturing North preferred wage laborers to slaves and the small farms and cold winters precluded agriculture on a large Southern scale, making slavery unprofitable. By 1810, most Northern states had prohibited slavery and Congress had outlawed slave importation (Gordon, 1998/1968). In contrast, with the invention of the cotton gin, the South's economy became wedded to cotton production, primarily grown on the sweat and toil of black slave labor on expansive and fertile Southern lands.

Between 1820 & 1860, a series of events fanned these two positions as the Northern elite continued to dominate national economic policy, wanting the West's riches and a

national railroad linking them to Northern production. Southern elite countered, desiring more lands for cotton production and wanting to spread a cultural way of life.

By the 1850's the economic interests of the elite in these two regions began to diverge. The issues centered on the acquisition of new U.S. territories and whether they would support Northern or Southern economic expansion, often framed around the rhetoric of slavery. While black and white voices calling for the abolition of slavery grew stronger, most Northerners felt they were fanatics. The Northern elite did not need slaves and the poor did not want more competition from freed blacks for scarce jobs; most whites feared association with blacks whom they considered an inferior race. Industrial capitalism in the North was based on free or reduced wage labor. In the South, plantation capitalism was based on slave labor. The North wanted a railroad to the West coast, preferential access to Southern raw materials especially Southern cotton needed for Northern textile mills and tariffs to protect from English competition. The South had no interest in a railroad as they had a rousing business with England. The South hated the Northern tariffs (Lapham, 1988). They did want expansion into slave-holding territories to increase cotton production. The election of Abraham Lincoln, a moderate from the newly formed Republican and predominately anti-slavery party, was the spark that indicated that the South was losing control of the direction of federal policy. The South succeeded and the bloodshed began.

Once elected, Abraham Lincoln, who claimed he was personally against slavery, felt it his duty to uphold slavery for the sake of the Union as well as his own belief in the superiority of the white race (Zinn, 1980). The Emancipation Proclamation was originally

a strategy in an attempt to force the Southern States to cease fighting against the Union. Abolitionist groups to spur the cause against slavery later used this.

As the war intensified with Union incursions into Southern territory, Southern elite drove thousands of able-bodied black slaves from their homes in order to prevent their escape or rebellion. Northerners were no less controlling about the demands that they placed on black laborers (Zinn, 1980). The elderly, women & children and the infirm were often left vulnerable to the abuses of both the Union and Confederates militaries; neither side was concerned about black family attachments or obligations.

> In the South, the twenty-slave law exempted large landowners from military draft and allowed paying for substitutes. This left the white poor and yeoman farmers to fight and die to protect the ruling class's interest (Gordon, 1998/1968; Jones, 1992). At any time, at least one-third of all Southern soldiers were absent without leave, to put in crops in an attempt to keep their families from starving but often too late for the planting season. Many poor white men found they and their families in danger from one military or another as poor white families "bore the brunt of military hostilities" (Jones, 1992, p. 65) as Union soldiers burned homes and lands.

The Alabama hill country and the North Carolina Quaker belt resisted the Confederacy and even supported Republican tendencies after the war. "Native white unionists" from North Carolina were forced to work in salt mines. They encouraged black slaves to escape, fanning the fear of black-white coalitions. "Underground biracial" coalitions such as moonshiners, bootleggers and others proved even more troublesome during the war. Enough men deserted into the backwoods, that this stigma was lost. They even became folk heroes, often banding with fellow deserters to protect their families against the military, Confederate, and Yankee alike. Their women folk also challenged notions of femininity, organizing to raid bakeries, cornfields, and other food

establishments to feed their families. These women implored their men to place their families needs first and supported them when they deserted their military posts.

With production of food and their cash crop, cotton, halted both by the devastation of Union incursion and the naval blockade, the Confederacy turned to Europe for loans. The middle and low classes of England and France had supported the North both because of its cultural resemblance to its own way of life and because of its anti-slavery stance. The upper classes of both countries supported the Southern cause because of the Southern class system and cotton for European textile mills. Two smaller nations were less of a threat than a united country and the South supported free trade with Britain. British military advisors predicted a Northern victory and Britain needed Northern wheat more than Southern cotton. Fearing internal divisions from the non-wealthy, British financiers recognized a losing business cause and declined to loan monies. Napoleon hoped for a Southern victory that might allow for French expansion into Mexico. A French banking firm also helped the Southern war effort by selling Confederate bonds (Gordon, 1998/1968). Because of their limited assistance, the South surrendered in Virginia, 1865.

Reconstructing Slavery

The term "reconstruction" refers to the period from 1865 to 1877 when the South was "helped" by the North to recovery from the impact of the war. The greatest victims were those who least benefited: blacks and poor whites. As part of the Presidential Reconstruction Plan, almost all of the 850,00 acres of Southern land in federal possession would be restored to its former owners. While blacks gained freedom from the legal aspects of slavery, those who remained in the South and were unable to buy land, continued to suffer devastating conditions. Poor, black or white, the latter, to a lesser degree, bore the anger of the Southern elite and the racism, classism and regionalism of

the Northern military, politicians, Freedman's Bureau agents and merchants that descended on the South. All agreed that blacks and poor whites needed to be taught a strong work ethic and the value of hard labor. Black migration, especially to the North, was seen as a threat to reconstruction. As labor historian Jacqueline Jones observed, the South's economic recovery was fueled by cotton and the landless families, black and white, that labored to pick it (Jones, 1992, p.2).

The annual labor contract

The issue of dependency was manipulated to serve the needs of the elite. To support pro-slavery, whites had cited the child-like simplicity and dependency of blacks. After the war, the same group exhorted the abilities of blacks to take care of their own needs, absolving employers of responsibility to provide anything but subsistence wages for their laborers. Northern Republicans through the Freedman's Bureau created an equally exploitative sharecropping system (Jones, 1992).

The sharecroppers' contract suggested that owners had a responsibility for providing housing and other needs for their workers year round. In turn, wage earners had to remain in residence year round no matter the crop cycle. This "compromise" also suited the Southern elite wanting to constrain black movement and migration. "Misbehavior" or "moral transgressions" allowed employers to deduct wages. Contract violations became criminal not civil offenses.

Blacks were forced until December 31st by law and promise of bonus payment–a share of the profits minus the cost of their upkeep- to hold to their place of residence and work.. The language of "annual" contract "masked" the seasonal nature of the crops, obscuring the non-productive months when workers were chronically unemployed so that employers did not take responsibility to provide for their laborers. While owners used the

December date to run off undesirable workers, blacks in turn would often seek employment elsewhere after their bonus payment.

Sharecropping

The share cropping system was feudalistic with owners speaking about "my man" especially if he was black. Blacks and others might be treated better if they were loyal to certain boss men. Desirable tenants were loyal, a good influence on others, hard working and compliant. Workers to be avoided included gamblers, drinkers, preachers, those involved in politics or organizing (Jones, 1992).

Family sharecropping began when farmers forced women and children to help in the fields rather than hire additional outside labor. Most families preferred family sharecropping to the work gang system because it gave the family some flexibility of deciding who went to the fields. The typical arrangement was 50-50 with the employer taking out for "furnishings" provided during the year. Family sharecropping supported the family staying together and gave the employer extra hands needed during peak times. Fathers or older brothers would often migrate to find labor during slack seasons. Workers were docked more than they earned for "lost time" when they left to work elsewhere or to tend their own crops. Some planters would defer making any payment until the end of the year to discourage movement and force compliance (Jones, 1992).

The more economically successful the cropper or tenant, the more likely to move to take advantage of opportunities to make their lives better or resist the intense surveillance of an oppressive planter. There were more black sharecroppers than black tenants but more landless whites in either category. The 1910 census revealed that only 28.8% of blacks and 42.1% of whites had lived on the same site the previous January. Sharecroppers were twice as likely to move as tenants were (Jones, 1992). Blacks and

poor whites alike preferred wage labor to cropping. Plantation owners preferred croppers to wage earners whom they considered more unruly. The textile industries, the largest employer after the plantations, denied employment to blacks. Positions were "reserved" for young, white males. Local labor shortages occasionally gave workers the power to bargain for higher wages or more tolerable working or housing conditions.

Both blacks and white poor survived by their families' gardening, weaving, hunting, fishing, clothes-making, husbandry and other subsistence activities which benefited only themselves while cropping and wage work benefited the employer (Jones, 1992). Black Belt planters in the '60s and '70's pushed for laws that limited or denied access to blacks to forests and streams as well as to guns without permission from whites in an effort to constrain their self-sufficiency and probably to prevent revolution. Some of the ruling whites even forbade their black croppers from having personal gardens! Workers could be sent on their way after a natural disaster or crop failure without any pay, even forcing laborers to give up their own crops, livestock or other means of livelihood to pay for their board. Employers might also confiscate all the possessions of a household to pay off credit (Jones, 1992).

Each household member was charged an upkeep fee and other charges so a family's "credit" often equaled or exceeded their annual bonus pay. Cheating workers was common. Beulah Nelson recalled the consequences of challenging this injustice:

> Now they had a place there, it was a big store they called the Commissary... these farm people would be calling theyself giving you this rice and just junk, but they charged you for that and above that. And at the end of the year, they even charged you rent for the house, but they may pretend they wasn't charging you....One time when Grandpappy was talking in the Commissary- a white charged him too much .... I could cipher and told that man he added wrong. I mean he'd cheated Grandpappy. My daddy, standing right there, didn't say a word for his

> own father. So I said it louder and louder- two more times. Then my
> older brother said something, too. Nobody said nothing. But they looked
> at me; then Brother. What happened? I got my worst whipping. Got beat
> for telling the truth! My brother was sent away that night. Then I had to
> go away to school. Just for telling how them people cheated Grandpappy
> at year's end.

The quality of housing for both croppers and cash tenants was a critical issue. This depended on the developmental needs of the family: a larger house, proximity to kin or schools, distance away from overseer, quality of land, leak proof roof and walls, intact wood flooring, number of rooms, storage, porch, windows, shade, screening, garden area, etc. These were sometimes used as barter by employers who might deduct an larger amount from the daily pay or the year end bonus. Blacks and whites depended on a kinship network that in its absence spelled more hardship for the family. White overseers sometimes encouraged valued white workers to invite their kin to live on the plantation to ensure their continued residence. The quality of housing still remained deplorable and families spent little time to beautify or fix up when they had no control over when they might be evicted. This might be used as an incentive to draw another family. The family's efforts focused on making their home usable. While white workers generally had better housing than blacks, even these conditions were deplorable. Prolonged residence on a particular piece of land represented good character (Jones, 1992) and made a person a worthy credit risk at banks. But since mobility was a form of survival for especially black but also poor white families, many of the croppers and tenants had to depend on the "credit" of a plantation owner to buy survival supplies for their families.

"No-account" white folks

By 1860, Southern whites were socially and economically divided as follows: one-third owned no land or slaves, one-fifth had at least one slave, of which one percent of

these slave-owners were planter-aristocrats, and half were yeoman or small, independent farmers. Many of the latter independent whites aimed for household self-sufficiency, avoiding the bondage of credit, and consumer relations with banks, railroads and towns. Corn was grown and womenfolk grew, processed, preserved, and bartered surplus food such as eggs, butter, cheese, etc. While such industry matched that of their New England neighbors, their more rough exteriors of their dwellings elicited judgments from outside visitors suggesting a lack of ambition. Even those who lived more nomadic existences such as herders often were able to accumulate property and status that was threatened by the fencing and enforcement of enclosure laws during Reconstruction similar to those laws that had restricted their ancestors in England.

Farmers who lived closer to plantations often planted cash crops, leaving less food for self-sufficiency. During the late ante-bellum period (1850s-1860s) there was a large white migration as many left the plantations regions in droves to seek a better life elsewhere. This enabled the ruling white elite to consolidate control over more rurally isolated regions by bringing in the banks, churches, stores and land speculation offices that those independent-minded residents had resisted.

After the Civil War, small farmers were forced to plant more cotton and less corn because of the physical land destruction, decreasing fertility, taxation and loss of their own crops. Railroads, banks and the introduction of commercial fertilizers hastened this concentration of the cotton crop. There even was an incursion of cotton production and banking into the upcountry and pine areas. Increasing commercialization, mechanization of agriculture and later, the Depression of 1873, saw more independent, small white farmers losing their land even in remote areas as crop-lien laws and merchant-creditors

pressed for payment. This intensified migration as former hunters and farmers in desperation became transient farm laborers, coal miners, and steel workers. Abandoning their previous locale and tenuous connections to the local white elites, these white migrant workers became wage laborers to their new white employers.

Most poor white folks had lived outside of staple crop regions, in terrain distinct from the dominant class, contributing to physical and cultural isolation from towns and the plantation system. Popular terminology for poor whites or "trash" was derisive and depended on the region. Wool hats, hillbillies, backwoods farmers, sandhillers (SC), clayeaters (GA), crackers (FL), clodhoppers (AL), beechers (NC) (Jones, 1992) were seen as mean, shiftless, and lazy. These "low down" people who "roved about" were beggars and "dull, unlettered and hopeless." Their women with their love of " pipe smoking, snuff dipping and expectorating" were "wretched." As one Freedman Bureau agent commented: "The Celtic race seemed to possess a special alacrity at sinking; and Irish families left on the track of Southern railroads become vagrant poor-whites in a single generation" (Jones, 1992, p.49).

These white "vagabonds" lived on wild game, scavenging & stealing - eking out a living apart from "respectable" folks – created a distinction, at least in the minds of elites between the " proud, hardworking yeoman" who provided the necessary wage labor needed by their planter neighbors and the "'No-account" hunter and forager" who resisted efforts to be pressed into labor. Foreign workers were sought but failed to solve the labor problem as they felt no endearing fondness for the Southern way of life and escaped to the North eluding both military and labor conscription.

> Poor-white native-born laborers were an embarrassment to the ruling elite and the discourse of a white supremacist society. Indeed, as more and

more whites faced a future of debt and dependency, Southern elite seemed to conspire among themselves, within the public realm at least, to ignore – or conceal – that fact. As a result, white tenants and sharecroppers were conspicuous in their absence from the postbellum debate on the Southern 'labor question' (Jones, 1992, p. 47).

By ten years after the war, poor whites picked two- to three-fifths of the cotton harvest, depending on the location while blacks had previously picked 9/10 of the harvest.

Many white landowners preferred black "freedmen" to the more able to be openly contentious poor whites, creating antipathy, and anger among desperate white workers looking for work. Whites now experienced the surveillance of white overseers, felt the powerlessness to prevent their women and children from working in the fields. This decreasing time spent on household industry increased their dependency and in certain regions, whites were subjected to the same laws that forbade black sharecroppers household gardens. Blacks squatters on land formerly belonging to poor whites and school houses constructed solely for blacks fueled the racial antipathy as poor whites feared that formal education and the industrious activity of blacks would better their lot, leaving behind their white counterparts. These whites responded with fear to their belief that blacks were bettering themselves, while they themselves plunged into debt. Greater racial distrust and hatred resulted, thus eroding the potential support from persons subjected to the same market struggles as themselves, dividing the possibility of using combined political power to change the systems. Poor whites "became workers to be exploited rather than kin or community members to be patronized according to Old South tradition" (Jones, 1992, p.47). As King Cotton grasped for their labor, the white elite had another group to domesticate to line the pockets of the ruling class.

Poor white male workers who had previously enjoyed more freedom and self-sufficiency felt it was beneath their dignity to labor under grueling conditions of back-

backing, stooped labor, causing them to be passed over by white overseers. Men and their womenfolk toiled under the same broiling sun to feed their families. Overseers fueled this racial division of labor. Many poor whites, threatened by their decreasing independence, employment opportunities and the back-breaking work, blamed their black co-laborers and joined white supremacist groups, dashing any hope for biracial political movements. Other more enterprising and independent whites clandestinely worked with blacks moonshining and bootlegging. Whites who had been sympathetic to either the Union cause or anti-slavery had returned home to hostile neighbors, boycotting merchants and warnings to be compliant. Vigilante groups such as the Klu Klux Klan and it's daylight manifestations such as the Red Shirts and the local Democratic Club, created terror by threatening the lives of black folks and white sympathizers as well. Whites, however, continued to have advantages over their black neighbors. They were often tenants rather than sharecroppers, were considered "semi-skilled" rather than "unskilled" and had less dangerous jobs in farming, mining and manufacturing (Jones, 1992). Whites had the power to vote and more access to jobs, schools, and some police protection.

Resistance: The Black family

There was a strong effort on the part of black families to find, reconnect with, and stay connected to their kin, including rescuing black children from forced white apprenticeships. Kinship networks of family and former laborers created the basis of loyal black communities that included churches and self-help societies. This loyalty to kin decreased a family's ability to be mobile and search for better employment. Southern planters often exploited the family's desire to stay close and together. Plantation schools' calendars revolved around the needs of the plantation owner. Northern administrators were often grossly insensitive to black family ties. The Freedman's Bureau shipped

nearly 30,000 blacks from all over the South to the Southwest to work for Northern planters (Jones, 1992). There was also forced migration of blacks clustered in cities and refugee camps as whites feared the buildup of such new communities (Jones, 1998). Especially vulnerable were the non-productive young, sick, and elderly who were less able to move from a given area and were often driven off a plantation.

The danger of organizing

Three and a half million blacks won emancipation in 1865 but found few allies among other laboring groups because of racism as well as threat of job competition. Southern planters, bankers, merchants, politicians and other elite whites feared not only the lack of labor control but also the freedom of blacks, e.g., ability to organize and vote; "idle" time posed a threat (Jones, 1992). Many blacks were docked pay on a daily basis or were blacklisted if they participated in political rallies or did not prove they voted for Democrats. This often indebted blacks, forcing them to limit their mobility and organizing activity. Local collusion often at cross purposes between the elite whites who wished to terrorize blacks into compliance and poor whites who wanted to scare blacks away from desired work was reinforced by random vigilante activities at night.

Whites who supported Republican causes, tried to organize labor or join with black resistance, used the labor of former slaves or in other ways acted independently from the ruling elite were violently visited by the Klu Klux Klan and other terrorist/lynching organizations to keep them in line with the dominant Southern ideology. This coercion was accomplished by "whipping, shooting, wounding, maiming, mutilation and murder of (Black,) women, children and defenseless men" (Kennedy, 1995, p.264). As the South Carolina gubernatorial candidate and former Confederate general Wade Hampton declared, "Every Democrat must feel honor-bound to control the vote of at least one

Negro, by intimidation, purchase, keeping away or as each individual may determine how he may best accomplish it" (Kennedy, 1995, p. 263). The latter was code for any violence, including murder. Although President Grant dispersed federal marshals to accompany blacks to the polls, both the courageous voters and their escorts were shot. With bloodshed, disappearing polling places, and polls being "closed" when potentially Republican voters appeared, the black vote was non-existent.

The Dawn of the New South

The attention of much of the nation was focused more on the deepening effects of the Depression of 1873 than the campaign of terror against blacks and the few sympathetic whites that was being waged in the South. With the Depression, starvation, railroad strikes, and other labor unrest as a backdrop, the country prepared to celebrate its first centennial. The Supreme Court delivered a glancing blow to the struggle against racism as it upheld the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Bill of Rights but wiped out the Federal Government's ability to enforce them. The Presidential as well as Southern elections of 1875 were still being contested. The Democratic candidate favored by the South was Samuel Tilden who publicly vowed to repeal the Fifteenth Amendment. He was also against corruption and therefore, not well-regarded by Northern robber barons. The Republican candidate was Rutherford Hayes who was also favored by the nativist Know-Nothing movement that desired to stem the tide of immigrant poor who flooded the labor markets: Catholic Irish and Southern Europeans and Jewish East Europeans in the North-East and Eastern-religions Asians in the West. The political machines of the Northern cities had also made a shambles of elections.

The returns showed 184 electoral votes for Tilden, one short of the 185 needed for victory and 165 electoral votes for Hayes. Hayes carried the popular vote. The votes

were disputed in four states, including three key Southern states: Louisiana, South Carolina and Florida, all of which had Republican governors. The presidential decision needed to be settled by a commission appointed by Congress by March 4th of the following year. A furious series of meetings and deals were struck behind closed doors under threat that Grant might stage a military coup and the South might again march on Washington. The result was Hayes won by one electoral vote. Florida historian Stetson Kennedy in his book, *After Appomattox: How the South Won the War* (1995), claimed that the deal made was to trade race for capital. The Northern Republicans were willing to turn their backs more resolutely on blacks in order to allow Northern industrialists access to Southern resources and privileges to create bargains with the Southern elite. The Southern white elite had learned their lesson during the Civil War about the need for industry in the South. Thus, Hayes was elected president and in turn, withdrew federal troops in the South, starting with the three contested states that then seated Southern Democrats. He then proceeded to appoint a majority of former Confederates to his Cabinet. With the withdrawal of federal troops, state houses fell to local Democratic militias. The hard-fought for gains for blacks were now under attack.

The end of slavery and Reconstruction brought the desire of white supremacists to exercise more authority over blacks. The Southern economy depended on the control of the labor movement of sharecropper/tenant farmer and wage laborers. Black people resisted efforts to keep them "in their place" or restrict their freedom of movement.

As Democrats took over legislatures by force, bonfires burned records of former laws created by the assassinated or fleeing legislators. A series of state laws had been created by lawmakers at the beginning of Reconstruction often referred to as the "Black Codes."

Designed to keep freed blacks in their former submissive places under the guise of "protection," these codes often denied African Americans the right to "bear arms, serve on juries and hold public offices" (Gordon, 1998/1968, p.180) and prosecuted blacks for a broad spectrum of behavior. Now these codes were made more severe.

"Vagrancy" laws reminiscent of the Elizabethan Poor Laws were one of the cornerstones of the Black Codes. Wealthy whites sought to control the roads and transportation systems for their own purposes. This put African-Americans at risk as they looked for employment, relocated their families or reconnected with kin. Enforced first by the departing union military and later by civilian patrols, blacks risked prosecution if they could not produce a signed note showing proof of employment by whites. This resulted in their imprisonment, swelling the Southern work crews or chain gangs used to improve the transportation systems (Jones, 1992). Unemployed black youngsters could be forced to apprentice to white "masters."

The North turned its back on the suffering of blacks in the South as they struggled with their own racism, classism, nativism and sexism in the North. Postbellum white supremacist mythology stressed the contented, simple-minded, compliant and dependent black servants and workers who remained loyal to the families that they served, often immortalized in white movies. At the same time, they depicted the black male as evil, dangerous, lusting, animal-like beasts who threatened their wives and daughters and the purity of the white race. Black females were considered "mammys" and beasts of burden. Both images used gender and animal-like mythology to convey the lack of value or non-humanity of black people justifying lack of decent living and working conditions and denigrating disrespect.

Native Peoples: The American Indians

As the nation celebrated its centennial in 1876, against the backdrop of the end of Reconstruction, and the specter of depression, General George Custer's army intended to teach Native People's their proper station in white society as the lowest social class. The tables turned, as the U.S. military was defeated in the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

Throughout the nineteenth century Native peoples had been robbed and killed and their resources of land, gold, oil, etc. stolen as the military swept westward to clear land for settlement including massacres at Horsehoe Bend, Bear River, Sand Creek, the Washita River, Marias River, Camp Robinson and Wounded Knee (Churchill, 1997). America's robber barons became wealthy and powerful as mostly white settlers, miners and railroads pushed westward, taking ancestral native grounds and disregarding Native sovereignties. Native peoples were crowded on to reservations in the Great Plains and American southwest, with poverty and death as their future.

Three hundred seventy one treaties (Churchill, 1997) were made between native nations and the U.S government, most which promised, but rarely delivered, adequate housing, education and health care (Kerr, 1997). These treaties were routinely broken, the over 500 nations were dislocated and wiped out by bloodshed and disease, all justified by "America's manifest destiny." With the discovery of gold in Georgia in 1838, 14,000 Cherokee were rounded up and forced to march to Oklahoma, killing 4,000 people on a journey since know as the trail of tears. Sun Chief, a Hopi Indian, remembers whites as liars or two-hearts, and a power to be feared. Native American resources made it possible for the United States to become a world power. To add insult to injury, U.S. presidential images were later blasted onto Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills, sacred lands of the Sioux, after military conquest, providing stark images of

"cultural domination" (Russell, 1994, p.32). Scattered and often relocated on uninhabitable terrain, the few nations that resisted like Chief Joseph and the Nez Pierce were hunted like animals. Despair and hunger preceded fatal disease.

In the last half of the nineteenth century many tribes were swept by the revival of the Ghost Dance. A Paiute name Wovoka encouraged a return to native customs and dress and prophesied that the powerful whites would be overcome by natural disasters because of their violation of deities and desecration of sacred lands. Native peoples, including those who had passed to the Great Spirit, would return to live in plenty and harmony (Altschuler, 1982)

The Sioux believed the "Ghost Shirt" worn during the ceremonial dance would protect them from white men's bullets and transformed this belief into armed resistance. In 1890, angered by white demands that the Ghost Dance cease, three hundred Lakota children, women and men resisted and were massacred at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Native population was down to 250,000 from an estimated high of 12.5 million when the white conquerors arrived in 1500 (Thornton, 1987 cited in Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000, p. 209).

Native inferiority had been a doctrine since the early Puritans' view of them as the devil's children. Reformers who insisted on justice and fair treatment for Native Peoples' often aided more racist agendas by attempting to integrate natives into white society with methods that pushed individual assimilation rather than respecting the communal values of native societies. They were met with resistance rather than appreciation as Native Peoples did not trust or cooperate with their agendas. While appreciating some of the positive aspects of their more communal societies, Lewis Henry Morgan and other

reformers believed they were keeping natives from extermination by forcing them to adopt more individualistic mores. Native people were paid individual wages rather than honoring treaty obligations to pay annual annuity payments.

Church workers attempted to replace "ignorant" tribal customs with a Christian education, but were ineffective. Beginning in the 1880's, children were forcibly removed from their parents by soldiers and sent to remote boarding schools to coerce them to assimilate. Others were adopted or placed in white foster homes and children were denied information about their parentage and heritage. . Native children from various nations were mixed together to force the children to learn English as their dominant language. Children's hair was cut in current styles, their traditional clothes were burned and they were re-named "Christian" names. Reformers believed that "shorn" of their Indian customs, these native persons would make good American citizens. Children were physically abused under the guise of discipline for many cultural infractions, including using their own language and practicing their own religions. Ward Churchill (1997), in "Crimes Against Humanity" speaks to this systematic indoctrination of Native children as a plan to dissolve the power of indigenous nations.

Cecilia Fire Thunder, a Plains Indian from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, grew up in the Red Cloud Indian School, a Catholic boarding school. She recounted the physical abuse by the nuns and brothers towards the children and pointed out how this violent oppression has been internalized within the Native communities. She and another Plains women, Iron Cloud, worked together relentlessly in their community to combat the alchoholism, physical violence, sexual abuse, and other internalized manifestations of this oppression on the reservations (Davis, 1997).

Under the guise of providing Native peoples with individual land titles, the Dawes Act of 1887 sold the surplus lands of each tribe after providing each native household with a plot of land. The monies collected from these surplus monies were administered in government trusts for the natives. Those documented to be in opposition had no voice in the sale of their lands. An estimated 80% of all tribal lands were lost. In 1891, Congress allowed hundreds of thousands of acres to pass into white hands.

By 1934, only sixty million acres of reservation land belonged to indigenous peoples. Many lands were not suitable for farming or grazing. Nations were being forced to become farmers when they had been hunters (Russell, 1994). After one hundred years of broken treaties, Native Peoples continue to have the greatest percent of people below the poverty line of any racial/ethnic group. Secret, involuntary sterilization effecting 40% of Native women continued until 1975 (Churchill, 1997).

Immigration: The teeming masses

During the Gilded industrial age of industrialists and robber barons, poverty was "discovered" in America (Altschuler, 1982). Between 1860 and 1900, the urban population exploded from 6.2 million to 42 million (Katz, 1986/1996). While there had always been poor people, the sheer numbers of people crowded into cities, many periodically unemployed fueled the American imagination and became the contrast between the rich and the poor became the subject of novels, art, and journalism.

Immigration captured the focus of nativist Americans concerned about "race" as the non-English arrivals came from Europe (Altschuler, 1982) and settled on the East coast. Those from Asia, especially China, arrived to work in Hawaii and the West Coast. As Chinese, Irish, Italians, Poles, Greeks, and other Eastern Europeans immigrated, intolerance and a fear of the diversity of customs, languages and especially, religions,

caused many to retreat into their own enclaves as Anglo-Americans did not welcome them into their neighborhoods (Russell, 1994). Race, class, ethnicity and religion fused into images of the undeserving and the undesirable as nativists expected Anglo conformity rather than embracing the newcomers as a part of a melting pot (Russell, 1994). Nonetheless, this shifting meaning of "race" became more central during this time as it became more useful to obscure social class differences as the elite and poor immigrants used this racial fluidity each to their own purposes (Jones, 1998).

While "racially" different from WASPs, the Eastern immigrants were seen as different from blacks and the Chinese. They took advantage of the opportunity to dissociate themselves from both. Better to be one step above the black and yellow devils even though seen as not quite white. Engles saw this racializing of the diversity of the working-class as the greatest obstacle of class solidarity and a weakening of the labor movement. Three of these groups that had several periods of immigration throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were the Irish, the Chinese and the Japanese.

Irish immigrants

Irish immigrants were from a country that had outlawed slavery since 1177. The Irish, especially Catholics and the lower class, knew violent oppression by the English first-hand, living under Penal codes that forbade them their own language, freedom of worship, and right to assembly. Daniel O'Connell, the Irish leader known as the Liberator attempted to rouse American Irish support of the abolition of slavery, "It was not in Ireland that you learned this cruelty," he declared, "your mothers were gentle, kind and humane .." (Ignatiev, 1995). Sixty thousand Irish in 1841 challenged their American kin calling for support for anti-slavery. The American Irish press condemned this "Address" for unity. Many Irish-Americans, eager to prove the were loyal citizens and

did not get their orders from the pope or Ireland, chose to turn their backs on blacks. Indeed, many of the Irish who immigrated before the Famine in 1845, were not poor nor Catholic and saw few similarities between themselves and the African slaves.

The "Famine Irish," poor and Catholic, starving and dying in their homeland because of the potato blight that destroyed their staple crop, were desperate for work and willing to take the most dangerous and degrading of jobs. Most had not paid for passage with the Passenger Act of 1847 but had been gladly dumped by their Anglo and Anglo-Irish landlords on their way to America to fill their holds with US produce. This was preferable to having desperate, disease-ridden, unproductive peasant tenants evicted on Irish soil. One million people died from the famine, many concentrated in rural areas such as County Cork. Another estimated one and a half million Irish emigrated from 1845-1851, half dying from starving and disease in coffin ships or soon after. Their average life expectancy was six years after arrival (Ignatiev, 1995).

Elite whites in the South preferred the Irish laborer in dangerous jobs that might risk blacks, their investment "property." In the North, many Irish as well as German immigrants ousted black freedmen from job positions they had historically occupied (Jones, 1998). Once firmly entrenched in these bottom-level positions, the Irish fought to earn recognition as whites as had previous Irish Protestant generations. Many Americans were still leery of these scruffy and strange-tongued Papists, many who spoke only Irish. Tragically, violence and racism against blacks, as well as the Chinese, was one way the Irish shamefully "earned" the "distinction" of being white. Irish continued to immigrate in large numbers as poverty and unemployment increased to work in the U.S. in mines, construction, domestic service and the textile industries until World War I.

Chinese immigrants

Chinese immigrants first came in large numbers to the U. S. in two separate waves. The first wave in the late 1840's was in response to the Western Gold Rush. The second wave was a need for desperate workers to complete the most dangerous section of the transcontinental railway, over the Rockies. Thousands of Chinese died in this last venture. Many Chinese men immigrated as part of a lucrative "coolie" (bitter labor) trade managed by U.S. and Europeans industrialists (Amott & Matthaei, 1996). Displaced by a great flood, some came voluntarily, taking out loans with middlemen brokers who docked their pay. Others were kidnapped from the Shanghai port.

The Chinese were valuable workers in the mines, on the railroads, in the timberlands, and in the laundries. They worked in woolen mills, fisheries and manufacturing as well as the citrus and celery harvests (Amott & Matthaei, 1996). The Hawaiian plantation system also used Chinese labor under the "Master and Servant Act" of 1850 that indentured workers to the plantation for a number of years. Like blacks in the South, Chinese also found themselves further indebted by the plantation "credit" system that often substituted cash wages for "credit" useful only at the company store. Additional credit was extended at exorbitant rates.

Since whites did not want to extend citizenship to what they considered an "undesirable race" (Hu-DeHart, 1997, p.165), men were not allowed to bring their wives or minor children. Single men, betrothed in arranged marriages, were pressured to marry and father children, especially a male heir, before leaving China. Brides left behind moved in with the groom's family. Mother-in-laws, to whom they were obedient, could be extremely strict. Husbands might return home once, father more children, or never. Because of legal restrictions, wives were not allowed to immigrate. Children, especially

male children, could. This set up an industry of "paper sons" adults and children who claimed the ancestry of an immigrant but might have paid for the "spot" and relevant information. Miscegenation laws prevented Chinese from intermarrying with whites (Amott & Matthaei, 1996). Hawaiian practices differed in that until Hawaii was annexed as a state, plantation owners encouraged Chinese men to bring over wives and children for additional labor. Chinese men also intermarried with Hawaiian women.

Chinese families were forced to survive under what has been called the split-household system. Struggling to survive with the physical absence of their husbands and on money sufficient only for food, these women called *Gum-Shan-Po* (Golden Mountain Lady) might only occasionally or even never see their husbands again. Prostitution proliferated as Chinese men sought temporary liaisons, racist whites prevented families from immigrating or reproducing in the U.S., and capitalists, white and Chinese, profited from the sex slave trade. The U.S. consul received a $10-15 bribe for each woman after the 1870's (Amott & Matthaei, 1996). Some women prostitutes came of their own initiative but many were bought from poor families, kidnapped, lured by tales of riches and sold into slavery. While technically the woman was free after a number of years, women who contracted diseases or had children were forced to work longer terms. Many whites and Chinese used Chinese prostitutes, making it a lucrative business. Daughters often faithfully sent the little money they garnered home to their families.

With the Depression of 1870's lingering anger was re-focused on the immigrants who competed for low-wage jobs, thereby causing a surplus of labor. The Chinese community, especially on the West Coast, was targeted by the working-classes. Their facial, cultural and religious differences as well as their lack of political power made

them a vulnerable target for the white supremacist labor movement. Chinese laborers, as was true of many low-status immigrants, were often used as strikebreakers (Amott & Matthaei, 1996). Chinese males were paid one-quarter the wage for white males made and half the wage for white females. White small-business owners were threatened by the proliferation of successful Chinese laundries. The proliferation of prostitution also was used against the Chinese, without an examination of the immigration policy for women. Employers had a sufficient labor supply so they were willing to lend their support to the outcry of labor voices wishing to ban the Chinese. This resulted in the first Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Laborers and their families were barred from entry while higher classes and their families could immigrate.

Poor immigrants were detained on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay from 1910 until 1941 from a few weeks up to two years to determine sponsorship and legitimate claims as to connections with present immigrants. (As opposed to days on Ellis Island for European's). Luggage was left in storage and the detainees were herded into the barracks and unprepared, were stripped and asked to give urine and fecal samples. Many legitimate children were barred from entrance because they did not answer interrogator's questions correctly. Details of the family home may have changed so fathers asked to provide verifying information might inadvertently cause a discrepancy with the result of the child being sent back to China. As this became the case, men paid for answers to questions for both legitimate and fraudulent children. This coaching information might be sent or was smuggled in the food, gifts, or laundry by the laborers that provided cooking, cleaning, etc. After an earthquake in San Francisco, many Chinese children claimed U.S. citizenship by birth since the vital statistics burned up in the ensuing fires.

Industrialization and Disciplining Social Class

Friendly Visitors & Gender Backlash

With the failure of the poor house to cut down on requests for relief, there arose a debate about public and private aid and "charity." The rhetoric was that public aid encouraged idleness while private aid reformed moral character. The Civil War had temporarily increased both public and private relief and decreased some moralizing, but soon immigration and rapid industrialization returned the status quo. Charity was a Christian religious obligation that was revitalized first in the 1830's when Charles Grandison Finney, an evangelist spurred a religious revival that let to visiting associations (McMath, 1993) as well as the Second Great Awakening of the late 1800's. By first distributing bibles and later, smaller pamphlets called tracts, voluntary missionaries came in contact with poverty. In addition to evangelization, and poor relief, these early volunteers also created the temperance movement, organized Sunday schools to educate children and adults, attacked prostitution and other forms of "immorality" and hoped to convert immigrants, especially papists.

Catholics in response began to form their own schools, orphanages and hospitals to avoid proselytizing as they performed the "corporal works of mercy" by supporting immigrant self-aid programs. Volunteers who came in contact with the poor first set out to save souls but eventually responded to the human dilemmas that they encountered. Offering advice, support, and spiritual counsel as well as distributing food, clothing and other forms of aid, these volunteers came to be called "friendly visitors."

Upper-middle class Protestant women were "the shock troops of charity" (Katz, 1986/1996, p. 67). As the primary reformers, these woman found new, expanding roles in their voluntary benevolent associations and experienced a sense of social competency

(often at the expense of the poor) as they expanded the role of the 'friendly visitor" to include fundraising, public speaking and other administrative skills. The popularization of the code of domesticity and the cult of true womanhood in the middle and upper class society reinforced women's primary role in the household in supportive functions as wife, homemaker and primary parent. Many women who were too successful as friendly visitors were harshly criticized with admonitions to be more auxiliary and supportive to men. Married visitors were to be known as Mrs. John Doe, rather than Jane Doe. Men created their own competing volunteer associations. Tensions over gender roles were often covertly acted out over the control of charity. Women were told they were natural for the work of friendly visiting but that they were too irresponsible and frivolous to be in crucial administrative positions.

This occurred about the time that young, unmarried mostly working-class women began finding wage work outside their homes and local areas as textile mill workers, teachers, clerks in taverns, dry goods stores and street vendors selling the families' surplus crops. "Mill girls" as they became know, were often girls from New England small farm families who no longer had the ability to provide for extended families on already divided up farmland. These young women, initially Protestant Yankees and later German and Irish immigrants, worked for two to three years before marriage for abysmal wages and under deplorable conditions.

Teachers were encouraged to channel their ambitions into the lowest rung of educational authority dominated by male superintendents and administrators. Women, who had worked in charity organizations tended to be older, more affluent with more years of experience that could threaten male authority. Ironically, the same dependence

that these women encouraged in the poor was what their husbands, ministers, local politicians and fellow charitable workers expected of them. Deference, not defiance, was the only acceptable option. The earlier optimism of these female "visitors" to help the poor overcome their moral and physical depravity was later replaced by a harsher and more punitive philosophy that blamed the poor for their misfortune.

Abolition of outdoor relief

With the effects of the industrial Depression of 1873, there was a mounting attack on all forms of relief as dole rolls grew even as per capita expense actually declined. Immigration and subsequent flooding of the labor markets addressed the needs of capitalists but depressed laborers wages. Some immigrants had been accustomed to receiving some forms of relief in their own countries and they felt entitled to ask for it here. An Irish writer observed that any relief would be problematic that interfered with the labor-market:

> Relief or welfare, rarely has had humane, effective alleviation of suffering as its main goal. Anxieties about social order and discipline, worries about labor supply, resentment of taxes and political ambitions all have fueled relief policy. (cited in Katz, 1986/1996, p.37)

"Unemployment" was discovered as a result of the 1893 depression as many middle class people acknowledged that lack of willingness to work was not what was flooding the streets of the northeast with unemployed, able-bodied men (Katz, 1986/1996). Employment agencies were created to stem the tide with little success. Municipal governments were overwhelmed and unable to respond to the tremendous needs. Financial federations know as community chests, organized and centralized fundraising efforts to meet some of the needs of the unemployed. While generally opposed to

municipal centralization, the business community responded supportively because it freed them from multiple funding requests (Katz, 1986/1996).

In Brooklyn, New York, Republicans campaigned for a tax cut that would benefit the wealthy as more reform-minded Democrats who also represented a coalition of poor and working-class constituents, protested. A compromise was reached that included phasing out outdoor relief within two years. When attempting to implement this plan, the overseer's offices were overrun with the starving families. The commissioners eventually acquiesced to the urgent pleas and distributed small amounts of supplies from the city's storehouses. As an example against further non-compliance, the commissioners were punished by subtracting the cost of this food from their salaries.

Charity organizing societies

In response to the cry for legal reforms and in an effort to organize and centralize the power of charitable associations, by 1877 in Buffalo, New York (Axinn & Levin, 1975), the Charity Organizing Society (COS) was created based upon the British model. (MacLeod, 1980). Charity workers were from middle and affluent classes who demanded accountability from those receiving "charity." Based on the model of previous "friendly visitors," they preferred giving moral to financial support, visiting people's homes and instructing them on cleanliness and thrift. COS believed it was the duty of private charity, not government. to look after the poor and lobbied government to stop giving aid including old age pensions. They believed workers should have prepared better for their retirement. The COS lobbied against outdoor relief such as food and coal distribution as they believed it contributed to moral deterioration (MacLeod, 1980).

The COS were self-proclaimed "experts" on the poor and began to "professionalize" the charitable "social work" of the indigent. Their work was based on the distinction

between the deserving and undeserving poor. Each case was treated individually, eroding the collective stigma of poverty to a stigma of individual character defect or "moral failure" (MacLeod, 1980, p. 76). This era, often know as the Gilded Age because of the staggering prosperity that it brought to the few, witnessed the birth of the "individual" in intellectual thought.

The Gilded Age

Technological advances in agriculture, manufacturing, the extraction industries and in the transportation systems crossing the land set the stage for the concentrated capital of the industrialists to gobble up all competition (Page, 1969). In 1869 the first transcontinental railroad was completed; by 1890 there would be five, owned by a few, along with more regional canals, rivers, and roads. Aided by government and in bed with science and religion, those in power in finance and industry attempted to squash opposition. These industrial "robber barons" created corporations and partnerships to form monopolies in manufacturing, transportation, commerce, and banking.

Social Darwinism

Along with technological development came the further development of the sciences. These bodies of knowledge acquired new powers of authority, legitimization, and control. Science infiltrated all levels of human society, further differentiating hierarchies of power. As in Europe, Social Darwinism characterized business, intellectual thought and the pulpit (Feagin, 1975). The focus shifted from the community or group to the rugged, independent individual in the U.S. The term "survival of the fittest" was coined by the Englishman Herbert Spencer (Altschuler, 1982) as he applied his theory of "natural" selection and the desirability of socio-economic stratification. Yale Professor William Graham Sumner, one of Spencer's most ardent American disciples, wrote there were only

two options, "liberty, inequality, survival of the fittest" or "non-liberty, equality, survival of the unfittest" (cited in Altschuler, 1982, p.83). Social inequality was part of the "natural" order (Lewis, 1978; Newman, 1988).

Social Darwinism suited American businessmen such as Andrew Carnegie, one of Spencer's good friend's, because it justified their actions, including having no social responsibility for "natural" misery and poverty around them (Altschuler, 1982). The wealthy characterized themselves as ceators of human virtue (Sumner cited in Feagin, 1975). The frontier conditions and the "taming" of the West flamed the dogma of the "rugged individual," focused on self-reliance and hard work. This led to the belief in "meritocratic individualism" (Newman, 1988, p.76). Each person was responsible for their destiny of success or failure. Hard work, virtue, and ability would be rewarded.

Compared to Europe, Americans believed that they were free of fixed categories of social class. In this land of opportunity, people believed they could aspire to a comfortable lifestyle with hard work; failure to do so was a result of one's own character flaws (Altschuler, 1982). The "ethic of personal responsibility is so pervasive in the United States. The origins of this value lie in the transformative effect of Puritanism, with its emphasis on each individual's personal relationship with God" (Weber, 1905), and the frontier experience, with its myth that only self-reliant individuals survived (Turner, 1930). Horatio Algier's popular novels celebrated the success of rural virtue. The industrial backdrops of the city, immigrants, and hard-nosed robber barons fell away as sobriety and hard work were rewarded by the gratitude of benevolent merchants (Altschuler, 1982). Thernstrom (1972) in *Poverty and progress: Social mobility in a*

nineteenth century city analyzed the promise that hard work and talent would be

rewarded in the nineteenth century and suggested that it served the upper classes:

> to integrate workmen into the social order, minimizing discontent and
> directing it against targets other than society itself. The repetition of
> success stories would have nurtured the hope that opportunity was just
> around the corner -- if not this week, then next; if not for oneself, then for
> one's children. ... the failure to succeed in the competitive race ...proof of
> individual inadequacy rather than social injustice. Politically explosive
> resentment would thus have been transformed into guilt and self-
> depreciation. (p.57)

Eugenics and the birth of the clinic

A new science was "discovered" about this time in England by Francis Galton

(Altschuler, 1982). Tossing the "mantle of science" (Katz, 1986/1996, p. 189) over the

judgment of which of the poor are deserving of societal aid, eugenics reassured the

affluent that whatever the deviance, biological inheritance was the explanation. It's

leading American advocate, Charles Davenport, saw eugenics as "the science of the

improvement of the human race by better breeding" (Katz, 1986/1996, p. 188). This

"science" legitimized white supremacy. During this time craniologist George Morton

asserted that black's smaller brains signified inferior intellectual capacity. This promoted

the U.S. Sanitary Commission to study blacks and made the "astonishing" discovery that

that Freed blacks were physically inferior or deformed compared to enslaved blacks and

unlike whites and similar to orangutans, black brains stopped growing after puberty.

Eugenics in a climate of Social Darwinism as interpreted by Herbert Spencer, John

Fiske, Alexander Winchell and Lewis Henry Morgan, "proved" that blacks were evolving

but not at the rate of the "superior races." Blacks, they believed, had enormous sexual

appetites and large sexual organs, yet infant mortality and venereal disease would

decrease the race and since mulattos could not produce beyond the third generation, the

black race would die out. The 1880 census data that the black population was increasing faster than whites caused shock and consternation. The birthrate of native, white Americans was dropping dramatically. Alarmed, white people feared a population explosion of "undesirables" overwhelming the "evolution" of the "superior races."

Medicine in the eighteenth century slowly transformed from a service provided to an individual or family to alleviate suffering to a responsibility of the medical practitioner to protect society, the social body (Foucault, 1984). The function of medicine evolved into environmental social control of hygiene/health for the good of the population as a body. The medical professional now served the public as protector and social control agent. The doctor developed a new status and power in society. With autopsies opening up the "hidden knowledge" of the body to the doctor's observational gaze, the secrets were now in the power of the professional (Foucault, 1973). Dis-ease or "the problem" became more important than the person who housed this problem. Eventually, the person *became* the problem or disease.

The doctor prevented the spread of diseases of the body and the psychiatrist prevented the spread of diseases of the mind. The clinic was developed to set apart the diseased to be examined and studied in a controlled environment. Such examinations had previously been conducted in people's own personal spaces. (Although many of the "insane" had been confined to prisons. The clinic was considered liberation from that punishment). In the clinic, the doctor taught both the patient and the emerging professional about the spread of disease. The doctor, guided by science, was the powerful moral, authority figure who controlled the clinic's operations under his gaze (Foucault, 1965; 1973). His wisdom was beyond questioning. Those who disobeyed were punished. To be cured, the

patient cooperated, internalized the doctor's orders, and followed the proscribed regime. The doctor, like a father–figure knew best.

Under eugenics the worthy poor or paupers of any race were transformed into patients. The hospital, asylum, poor house or prison was developed to house those who were still diseased. The dependent mentally ill became inmates and the morally unworthy became prisoners. The psychiatrists replaced the minister or priest as the expert responsible for the mental patient and to the public, the prevention of dis-ease. The prison warden, the expert for the prisoner, prevented the spread of moral contamination. With a declining birth rate among the affluent, the reproduction of any group seen as inferior was a threat. What diagnosis and institutions could not control, involuntary sterilization would (Katz, 1986/1996). This helped free the labor market of unproductive workers who could be kept under surveillance and disciplined to become more normal (Foucault, 1979). Eugenics retained popular support until Hitler's hideous experiments pushed it into more subtle discourses.

Scientific Charity

> Alarmed by the disorder of American cities in the last third of the nineteenth century, frightened by the specter of a militant, organized, and non-deferential working-class, the charity organizers ... set themselves to teach the poor that they had no rights. (Katz, 1986/1996, p.60)

Those who worked with the poor armed themselves with a new social theory called scientific charity. " Scientific charity drew on the legacy of antebellum volunteerism for its methods, friendly visiting; its key distinction, the difference between the worthy and unworthy poor; its enemy, outdoor relief; and its personnel, well-to-do Protestant women" (Katz, 1986/1996, p.61). These workers focused on the poor themselves while ignoring the structural causes that invited destitution.

As scientific charity reached its zenith, men were eventually given the paid positions and women stepped back into auxiliary roles as visitors as voluntary associations became more bureacraticized. Social work adopted a casework approach to its work with the poor, especially in the socio-political climate of individualism at the time, giving "scientific" validation to the *responsibility of the individual* and in response to the fear that pauperism degenerated the mind and soul. People also feared that this "disease" could be transferred from parent to child and from pauper to the able worker. "Social and economic salvation" was available through the healing power of work.

Friendly visitors were the investigators who reported their findings to the paid professionals. Independence was to be the goal of aid. Independence of thought and non-acquiescence was ingratitude and resulted in aid withdrawal. One reformer, Rev. S. Humphrey's Gurteen, said the goal of aid was "repression of pauperism" (Katz, 1986/1996, p.77). Gurteen believed that the "Frankenstein" of poor relief would cause civilization to fall, as it had in Rome.

Professionalization of the charity worker

Poor houses were transformed into workhouses, and the various populations were segregated and transported to orphanages, old age homes, asylums, etc. The resulting larger institutions became even more impersonal, cold and brutal as communities no longer had a relationship with these institutions and impoverished relatives found the increased distance hindered regular contact. With the advent of "scientific" methodology, the growth and institutionalization of the charity organizing society, and the abolition of "outdoor aid," professionals all but replaced the connections with churches. "Clerics were replaced by social workers and evangelism by therapy" (Axinn & Levin, 1975, p. 91). As "professionals" took over the administration of these huge

institutions, human connection to the inhabitants' previous lives was lost. In the case of asylums, the role of psychiatrists enlarged and the mentally ill became "diseased."

After nearly three decades of experience, these "experts" of charity began to organize professional associations, create scholarly journals, develop training programs and regulate criteria for becoming charity or social workers. Regular conferences with "scientific" statistics and papers shared this "professional" ideology. Anne Witz (1992) in *Professions and patriarchy* developed a theoretical framework of how class and gender interact in the professionalization of groups, especially health care and service oriented groups to exclude or control women. Three groups of these "expert" workers emerged: those who worked with private groups (social workers), those who evaluated and dispensed state aid (social welfare workers) and those who eventually lobbied for reform and urban renewal (community organizers). Eventually, this first group further specialized in casework (the physical needs of the aid recipient) and the clinical work (the mental or personality needs of the recipient). The former was influenced by Mary Richmond's book *Social diagnosis*. The latter work was influenced by Freudian psychology (Katz, 1986/1996).

Specialization drained the movement of vision and vital energy, divorcing the profession from social reform. Enduring, miserable conditions did not evoke compassion or soften judgments of the poor's immorality. Public opinion hardened, justifying cruel, punitive attitudes and action towards the poor while ensuring a cheap supply of labor. The "experts" merely exchanged the language of deviant character for deviant personality (Romanyshyn, 1971). Experts worked on changing people, urging them to adjust to their

environment, rather than working with the poor to change the conditions that sustained that environment (Katz, 1986/1996, p.171).

Break-up of impoverished families

By 1875 another component of poorhouse reform included the lamentable institutional conditions for children. Reformers developed legislation that forbade children to be housed in poor houses and instead, sent them to orphanages even if they had living relatives. The purpose was to disrupt the transmission of dependence by cutting off the breeding of "moral misfits" and criminals (Katz, 1986/1996). This led to abuses such as the Western Orphan trains by which New York City "reformer," Charles Loring Brice began in 1856 to ship at least 90,000 children from the city to farms and ranches to "rescue" them from the depths of poverty, depravity and dependence. Many of these children still had living, though impoverished, relatives.

In 1867, the first Kanas-bound train arrived and by 1893, almost 1,000 children had been "placed" in the state. This resulted in legislation in 1901 to give the State Board of Charities authority to scrutinize the organizations and children being placed. No homeless child could be placed without a certificate of good character and a five thousand dollar security bond to prevent the state from being a dumping ground for dependent children. By 1910, over four thousand children had been "placed" in Kansas. Despite growing debate against indenture, Kansas, along with twelve other states, still allowed indenture of children who had been turned over to county authorities or poor farms. In 1930, the Last Orphan Trains arrived in Kansas, ending the movement.

Criticism about "scientific" charity

There were a few courageous voices that countered the dominant view of the experts. At the Conference for Charities and Corrections in 1886, Fred H. Wines challenged the

"pseudo-scientific" (Axinn & Levin, 1975, p. 93) use of statistics to prove the individual causes of poverty and crime. Instead, he pointed to major societal changes that were contributing causes including industrialization that increased unemployment and crowded cites, the accumulation of capital wealth in the hands of a few, and change in the status of women. In 1890, Franklin B. Sanborn urged the attendees to reconsider outdoor aid which he called "family aid" to be dispensed to families in their homes. He spoke out against breaking up families and the "unspeakable distress of the old and the virtuous" by "forced association with the dregs of mankind" (Axinn & Levin, 1975, p.94).

One critic eventually changed her tune about charity and eugenics. Recognizing the necessity for social reform, Josephine Shaw Lowell eventually spoke out against perverted investigations that served no purpose but to invade the privacy of the poor (Katz, 1986/1996). Another complained about its "deadening and life-sapping" force:

> White slavery recruits itself from charity, industry grows bloated with it, landlords live of it; and it supports an army of officers, investigators, clerks and collectors ... it deprives (its victims) of privacy and independence, or subjecting them to the cruelest mental and physical torture, of making them liars, cringer, thieves. The law, the police, the church are the accomplices of charity. . . . Its object is to get efficient results - to just keep alive vast numbers of servile, broken-spirited people. (Katz, 1986/1996, p.87)

Another reformer blasted the increase of funds that never directly benefited the poor but lined the pockets of the non-poor, including professionals (Katz, 1986/1996).

Resistance and Social Class Struggle

Gathering Clouds of Labor Unrest

By 1877, the depression tightened its grip on the laborer and the small farmer or business owner. Mechanization was increasingly changing the face of labor as machines replaced undesirable human workers, especially those who encouraged agitation and

organizing. This was the beginning of the speed-up when the worker was forced to keep pace with the machine rather than having control over their own labor (Brody, 1980).

Previously, skilled workers were paid not by the hour but by the product. This gave them some control over their own pace of work and their hours with very little supervision. In certain industries, less skilled laborers had worked with skilled workers learning the trade, sharing in a lesser cut of the profit, and preparing for the day that they would learn enough to work on their own or replace the more skilled worker. People had pride in their work and passed their craft down to younger generations. People had been used to hard work and long hours under difficult conditions, but they often worked in the company of family, friends, and neighbors. They also could choose when to work and when to take off depending on family, religious and agricultural needs. Now with mechanization, workers were expected to work more, regular, and longer hours, under increased supervision, being interdependent on noisy, demanding machines rather than on human co-workers with whom they had a personal connection. Industrialization isolated workers and made work repetitive, boring, and meaningless as management subdivided production to promote efficiency. Workers lost touch with their own contribution to the final product as well as with co-workers.

Rural men and women are typically pushed off the land and into wage employment by social, economic, and political pressures. The landless, the hungry, the politically powerless, the social disaffected- these are the first industrial recruits. Laborers recruited by coercion require too much supervision in the workplace; and their resentment often contributes to political instability (Wilensky & Lebeaux, 1965, p.55).

The ruling elite wished to transform the disconnected immigrant peasant into a grateful and efficient laborer. Labor unrest often begins with absenteeism, intentional slow downs, sabotage, and simple walkouts when there are other employment possibilities. With the rise of industrialization, increasing layoffs, and worsening worker conditions, indirect labor protest was transformed into more direct action. From the late 1820's until the Civil War, working people had united together to protest unfair labor practices such as in the Lowell women's textile strikes and the Lynn Shoemaker strike, high rents and poor housing conditions, outrageous basic food prices such as the Flour Riots, and anti-war conscription such as the draft riots in New York City in 1863. Tenant farmers had also organized anti-rent strikes (Zinn, 1980). Usually, the targets for the frustrations were mill owners or authorities that created the oppressive conditions.

All too often, however, working-class groups focused their anger on each other, nativist white against immigrants, immigrants, such as the Irish against blacks and Chinese with whom they competed for jobs and later, Jewish immigrants. Less visible but perhaps no less violent, men turned their anger against women. Local and state militias often were called in to violently surpress any labor disturbance. The courts were decidedly anti-union. After the Civil War, however, unions slowly became stronger as leaders gained more experience and the Supreme Court upheld their legality. Large factories brought together a large number of workers from different ethnic and occasionally racial, communities who were more disconnected to their employer. Many in the ruling classes feared labor unrest and applauded the violent repression of French activists in Paris, 1871 (McMath, 1993). National Guard Armories were built across the nation after the 1877 strikes and riots (Piven & Cloward, 1977).

Discontented Western ranchers and farmers

Like wage laborers, many producers on small farms or businesses were unable to exert much control over the subsequent price fixing on their products and transport to market or to bring in more raw materials and household goods (McMath, 1993). Texas cattle ranchers resisted the imposition of higher transportation costs and low local selling price of cattle by the "long drive" of their cattle to the more populous railroads towns in Kansas where competitive prices made shipping to Chicago slaughterhouses more profitable. Meanwhile, settlers eager to escape the more classed society in the East and looking for opportunity in the Midwest (Gordon, 1989), were sold more fertile land by the "lords of industry" (Lloyd, 1884) such as railroad magnates Vanderbilt, Hill and Harringman as well as by unscrupulous land agents who managed to sell fraudulently acquired land from territorial governments.

With the Homestead Act of 1862, this land was given by the federal government to lay the transcontinental railroads while the less fertile and desirable land were given free to settlers who managed to survive five years on the homestead. The Homestead Act had been a concession to labor; if too many workers were discontented in the cities, better to siphon off the unrest by luring people out West with the dream of improving one's economic situation (Pivens & Cloward, 1977). Only one out of five hopeful settlers was able to get the free land. Native Americans by 1880 had been pushed onto reservations, clearing the way for white settlement, mining interests and other business opportunities.

Small cattle ranchers had worked cooperatively for years with open grazing lands. Farmers, aided by railroad barons, and the invention of barbed wire, pushed for enclosure laws to cut off the ranchers' "long drive" and fight for water rights (Gordon, 1998). The farmers were anxious to pay off the high credit and cost of startup that slapped settlers in

the face after being lured from the East with free passage. The number of farms tripled between 1870-1900. With the invention of the chilled iron plow, better seed and later threshers, etc., small farmers and ranchers might have prospered in spite of the often-harsh forces of nature. Between fencing, high transportation costs, price controls and several years of severe weather, however, many cattle ranchers lost their holdings. They became tenants to the bankers who held liens on their mortgages.

In spite of an Eastern and European market hungry for produce, monopoly control of banking, communication networks interests in the larger mercantile establishments as well as influential government connections resulted in low prices for the farmers' produce and high prices for imported goods. As the population in the U.S. grew, the amount of paper money based on the available gold did not keep pace, resulting in less available money in circulation. Farmers, like ranchers, were in debt to banks for property lien loans to cover the newer farm machinery, seeds, and livestock, and were struggling to pay back with dollars. These dollars were now worth more than when borrowed because of their diminishing amounts, increasing the profits of the financiers but causing many farmers to lose their lands. These farmers like the ranchers, also became tenants.

The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 was applauded by many that suffered under the elite. Railroad workers struck against wage cuts and blacklisting of union members. The strike is notable as the first time that U.S. federal troops had been called out to violently squash a labor dispute. In spite of this violent reaction, labor unions grew strongly. The Knights of Labor was an influential national union that declared itself open to all members regardless of "guild" or occupation, race or sex. Regional unions, however, often had separatist policies for blacks and women. It's strength of membership

increased until the Haymarket Affair of 1886. Three thousand protested the police firing on union members who were harassing workers who were brought in as strikebreakers or scabs. During the demonstration, a bomb went off as police approached the speaker's platform, killing seven policemen and wounding sixty-six. The police open fire on the crowd killing three and wounding two hundred. Eight labor leaders were arrested although there was some evidence of a police agent *provocateur*. Amidst world-wide protests since seven had not even been in attendance and the eight was speaking when the bomb went off, all eight were convicted and five were soon executed. Both the elite and middle-classes blamed the labor unions, especially the Knights of Labor, for the violence.

By the end of the century, over 750,000 workers had gone on strike (Piven & Cloward, 1977). Notable strikes included the Atlanta Washerwomen's strike of 1881, the sugar cane workers strike in Thibodaux, Louisiana, in 1886, four major strikes in 1892: the Tennessee miners strike, the Buffalo railroad switchman's strike, the Homestead, Pennsylvania Steel strike, and the copper miners strike in Couer d'Alene, Idaho. Federal troops were sent to the 1894 Pullman Palace Car strike in Chicago, and the Anthracite Coal strike in 1900. Workers learned that if the strike was large, organized, and had enough popular support, management could be made to grant important concessions such as fewer working hours, some safety concessions, and occasional higher wages. The risk of brutal repression was high as the laborer also learned that government entities sided with capitalist business and banking interests. Eugene Debs, a socialist who was imprisoned in the Pullman strike, commented that the allied industrialists had everything going for them: capital, the newspapers which often fabricated and fanned public opinion,

the clergy, the courts, the state militia and federal troops. Government power using military force crushed the economic power of the strikers.

The Farmer's Alliance

Local farmers began to cooperate, get together socially and then organized together to exchange agricultural information in a movement called the Grange. This later became more political as farmers' consciousness was raised in this and other agricultural organizations (McMath, 1993). First in Western New York state and later in Texas, a movement called the Farmer's Alliance also grew in strength and popularity. Alliances were organized locally, each one unique, and were composed of small farmers and merchants. These groups sought ways to band together to wipe out the higher prices imposed by "middlemen" as well as to oppose the exorbitant costs that were lining the pockets of the absentee capitalist while imposing hardship on small producers.

By 1886 the Texas Alliance issue a proclamation declaring their support for their co-laborers in their struggles against "the onerous and shameful abuses that the industrial classes are now suffering at the hands of arrogant capitalists and powerful corporations" (Zinn, p. 280). They named their combined struggle the Populist movement and they called for a united national labor conference. The Texas Alliance also created a statewide cooperative to process the cotton crop but needed money. The Alliance called on its own members' to pledge as a loan since the banks refused. $200,000 was pledged and money poured in but only $80,000 was eventually collected, not enough to succeed in the venture (Zinn, p.281). This convinced members that they needed economic reform.

Cries for Social Reform

Two writers in particular fanned the grassroots cry for national social reform that marked the late eighties and the nineties after the human suffering of the seventies.

Henry George wrote *Progress and Poverty* in 1879 and Edward Bellamy wrote *Looking Backward* in 1888. Both begged the question of why so many people were in poverty when the ruling class was prospering. Many people had become involved in reform movements whether the temperance movement, women's suffrage, the earlier abolitionist movement, and various labor movements. Those who became involved in the Populist movement were people already involved in the social fabric of their rural communities. Many linked their Christian faith with their zeal for reform. The focus on producer rights, producer-consumer coalitions, anti-monopolist and vestiges of radical republicanism: equal rights for all, were its platform (McMath, 1993). Some joined the Greenback Party (1878) or the Free Silver movement (1873) in order to encourage more circulation of federal monies or the Anti-monopoly League (1881) to control big business. By 1890, the Populist movement evolved into a political party, garnering a significant vote in the 1892 presidential elections and the 1894 Congressional Elections.

The Populist Party

The party looked with promise to the 1896 Presidential elections, but at least five obstacles obscured the way (McMath, 1993). The first was the struggle of *racism* within the party. Many black Populists were realistically reluctant to rely on white leaders who talked about racial unity and black civil rights while they still believed in social separation and the racial inferiority of blacks. This was the party that supported Western Knights of Labor members who targeted and killed Chinese laborers on at least two occasions and was active in other anti-immigration and nativist sentiments.

The second issue was *sexism*. The parent organization, the Farmers' Alliance, was a highly women-involved organization. Many Alliance groups especially in the West had fought for women's suffrage. Within the Populist movement, this involvement of women

in leadership continued including one of its most famous orators, Mary Elizabeth Lease, who coined the phrase, "Let's raise less corn and more hell." Yet, there were areas of the country that opposed women's leadership. When the *Populist movement* became the *Populist Party*, political liabilities were shed as the party wooed Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans and both in the Western states.

The third obstacle was *classism*. Many local and state movements had been integrated by race, sex and class. As political maneuvering increased within the party, the social class interests began to become overt as the common "class" of "producer" broke down into some landed gentry, the small independent farmers in contrast with tenant farmers, blacks and whites, both disenfranchised from the political process along with white women partners of propertied males.

The fourth obstacle was a *regionalism* as the disparate areas of the country had its own priorities, needs and stands on issues such as gender, race and class. Each region had its own economic interests and dominant ethnic groups. This combined with the fifth issue, *partisanship*. To win the Presidential election, the Populist Party needed to woo voters and even support from either of the two political parties. As Howard Zinn (1980) described in his *People's History,* "Once allied with the Democratic Party in supporting William Jennings Bryan for President in 1896, Populism would drown in a sea of democratic politics" (p.288). While garnering a strong popular vote, the Democratic-Populist candidate lost the Electoral College. This election was the first to use enormous amounts of money (Zinn, 1980). The Populist Party and movement soon collapsed although with a legacy of significant reforms including a bureau of agriculture and rural free delivery (Page, 1969) which sparked the growth of mail order catalogs.

The settlement movement

In the cities, reform was brewing. Edward Devine's writings focused on the groups in society that exploited the poor. Some social workers began to broaden their focus (Waxman, 1977). This small minority looked to the environment of the poor and the changes necessary to mobilize the community resources in their aid. The settlement movement was the beginning of the development of group work and community organizing as another type of social work. The movement refocused on the collective causes of poverty, rather than the focus on the individual (Waxman, 1977).

Originating in England in 1884, the settlement movement's goal was to bridge the gulf that industrialism had created between the rich and the poor, to reduce the mutual suspicion and ignorance between the classes, and to give more than charity (Katz, 1986/1996, p. 164). Young, college-aged Americans, influenced by social Christianity, brought the movement home to "tame the city wilderness." Settlement workers lived and worked in impoverished urban environments for several years, becoming actively involved in their new communities in ways that differentiated them from the "friendly visitors" of charity organizations. Settlement workers opened educational opportunities to both children and their parents, hoping "to awaken aesthetic and spiritual sensibilities to facilitate the transition to the middle class" (Altschuler, 1982, p.107).

Especially after the depression of 1893, settlement workers added political activism to their work of "cultural uplift" and worked for reforms such as tenement house laws, cleaner neighborhoods and parks, expanded school services and factory safety regulations (Katz, 1986/1996). Workers like Jane Addams, of Chicago's Hull House, also defended workers right to organize for higher pay and better working conditions although she deplored strikes and violence. Settlement workers also urged all citizens to take an active

interest in the affairs of their cities, for the well being of all. Civic loyalty would glue together all class factions, as would nationalism on a larger scale. While initially not effective in instituting larger reforms, many settlement workers became professionals who continued to effect change on behalf of the poor.

Nonetheless, settlement workers as a whole did not question industrial capitalism as a system. Instead they suggested ways to ease its harsh impact on workers, encouraging them to improve their lives enough to move up out of the grasp of its most repressive features. Nor did settlement workers address the full impact of racism (Katz, 1986/1996). While speaking out for decent housing reform for all of the poor, these workers did not confront racial segregation. In fact, they continued to segregate the settlement houses and did nothing to encourage or support African Americans' ability to leave the crowded cities. Blacks were actively isolated socially and deprived of many basic rights. Many white reformers supported the societal status quo.

Lifting as we climb

Whites, however, were not the only reformers. Other racial groups were also active in bringing about change in their communities and in the nation. Black women, for example, worked hard to use their skills to help African Americans both in the South as well as the North. While schools to educate black children had sprung up during Reconstruction, Jim Crow closed down many Southern black public schools, re-segregated them, and often allowed them to operate on a very limited basis. Many schools were open only four months every year and did not offer courses beyond the seventh grade (Amott & Matthaei, 1996). Many black women and a few black men worked under poorly paid and intolerable conditions to educate black youngsters. Money

raised in the North by African Americans and some whites created private schools and later colleges where many blacks were educated.

The anti-lynching campaign of Memphis newspaperwoman Ida B.Wells sparked a black woman's club movement that worked to educate and address issues of African Americans in general as well as the conditions of black working women. Organized under the founding leadership of Mary Church Terrell, the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) mobilized over 50,000 black women by 1915 who worked for social reform "lifting as we climb" (Amott & Matthaei, 1996). Seeking to connect with their white sisters' organizations working for similar reforms including labor issues, suffrage, temperance and urban conditions, these reformers encountered racism, resulting in segregated organizations, paralleling society. Many persisted in working for reforms across racial lines. Mary White Ovington led Wells, Terrell, Florence Kelley, and Lillian Ward to join a bi-racial group of men including W.E.B. DuBois to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, immigration, slavery, reconstruction, and racism towards Native Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans and other ethnic groups, marked the country. The failure of many small farms and ranches, industrial accidents, multiple depressions, labor unrest, the rise of monopoly control, and the miserable poverty of many poor people in a rainbow of colors created a mosaic backdrop to the increasing affluence of a few upper class, ruling families and the relative comfort of the middle class. It was the unacknowledged, dangerous and backbreaking labor of countless enslaved, indentured, and waged laborers who created the capital to propel the United States into the position of an emerging world power. Social relations were uneasy

in spite of the promise of opportunity. The ethnic, racial and religious diversity of the "teeming masses" often were divisive as each group competed for limited jobs, focusing their rage and frustration against each other rather than the wealthy (Altschuler, 1982). With images of the Haymarket Riot, the Pullman Strike, the 1894 march on Washington of Coxey's Army of unemployed workers, and the Populist movement in the minds of many affluent Americans, the fear was that social discontent would brew again in the new century (Katz, 1986/1996).

Automation, Agrarian Reorganization, & Migration

The labor shortages were in the city as manufacturing dramatically increased and farm production improved and stabilized. Immigrants who had been farmers increasingly located in cities in either production or service related work. With increased life expectancy, many children of farmers, no longer needed at home for family survival, migrated to cities in search of work. Both groups took jobs requiring little or no skills, as children of the middle and upper classes filled the expanding professional occupations. While the popular ideology of the small, enterprising farmer or businessperson persisted, the reality was by the late 1800's waged and salaried persons had increased to sixty-two percent of the labor force (Piven & Cloward, 1977).

Labor shortages forced employers and hunger forced families to utilize more women. More women were needed to enter the wage labor force to help the working-class family survive. Many African American, poor white and immigrant woman were excluded from the cult of true womanhood as they desperately sought employment in Northern industries as well as Southern lumber, tobacco, and domestic service to feed their families (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000). As farming became more mechanized and available farmland taken over by agribusiness, rural young single women came to the

cities to support themselves, contribute to the support of their families, improve their chances of finding a desirable partner, escape the hardship of farm life and seek adventure. In a 1930's survey, 86% considered their situations financially better in spite of loneliness, depression and dreariness of their work (Hargreaves, 1980). Another 1935 South Dakota survey showed that more than twice as many farm girls than boys left the farm before age 18 although the average age was over twenty. Many of these young women were better educated than their brothers who left (Hargreaves, 1980).

Women usually were given the less "skilled" jobs because of their sex. Even though they were as productive as men, and most were better educated, women were paid lower wages than their male counterparts. Their supplemental wage was essential as the men in the family were also paid pitiful wages. Mothers contributed both to the survival of the family and to production indirectly by taking care of the family's physical needs, birthing more children to contribute to family survival and supplementing the family budget by caring for both familial and non-relative boarders (Lamphere, 1987). Mothers living in rural areas continued to contribute by growing food for their families as well as participating in various parts of the growing cycle of the family's cash crops.

In the South with agrarian reorganization and industrialization, black and white workers were pitted against one another as machinery decreased the need for unskilled and semi-skilled labor (Piven, 1977). A typical scenario would be that black workers would be given backbreaking jobs, such as handpicking cotton. When technology upgraded and mechanized components of the job, decreasing the need for labor and making the work more desirable, a smaller number of white workers would be brought in because they were more "skilled" to deal with the technology. As status increased with

job title, white workers struck for wage increases, safety regulations and better working conditions. When management felt too pressed by the increased costs, they fired the white strikers and replaced them with desperate black "scabs" that were paid one-third the wages. White workers took their anger out on black workers rather than management who avoided being the targets of the racial and class conflicts (Jones, 1992).

Coal mining, lumbering, turpentine extraction and phosphate mining

Blacks and whites in the South increasingly turned from agriculture to other Southern industries for wage labor. Southern factory jobs in general were not open to blacks. The few positions available were degrading work for little pay. Blacks in general but also whites turned to lumbering and extraction industries. Extremely hazardous working conditions and very low wages were the norm. Southern extractive industries such as turpentine and phosphate were well established even before the Northern investors and Southern owners co-operated to bring the industrial revolution South after Reconstruction ended in the mid-1870's. Many non-agricultural industries such as coal mining and lumbering were given tax breaks to facilitate their production. Half of the rural population in West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee made their living from extractive industries rather than farming (Jones, 1992).

Railroads and other transportation systems, especially water, provided wage work including cutting and hauling rails and ties, sometimes paying 1.75 to $2 a day in some areas but generally paying 75 cents for a full day's work. Any Yankee employer who failed to comply with local "customs" such as paying blacks less than white workers, risked the vigilantes taking out this breech on the black workers. Lumbering, mining, and saw mills had the highest accidents, with mining most dangerous with 48,000 workers killed between 1906 and 1935 by explosions, cave-ins, poisonous gas and other

dangers (Jones, 1992). Bad weather, accidents, exposure to wet, cramped, crowded conditions, and turf wars were a few of the hazards of work. Bad weather also meant not being paid. Workers who were transported had that docked from their pay. Employers found many creative ways to dock a worker's pay. One well-known mining song by labor lyrist Joe Hill, *Drill, Ye Tarriers, Drill!* described "Big Jim Goff" being blown "a mile in the sky" by a premature blast.

> Now when next payday comes around, Jim Goff a dollar short was to be found. When asked the reason, came this reply, 'You was docked for the time you was up in the sky!" And, drill, ye tarriers, drill! (Hill, 1880/1967, p. 77)

Many workers and their families lived in camps and were paid with tokens or "scrip" to be redeemed in the expensive company store. Florida phosphate workers were the lowest paid–20 cents an hour for 12-hour days spent detonating dynamite and loading the rock into furnace like dryers. Ruptured eardrums crushed limbs and asthma were some of the occupational hazards. Mining camps often had the greatest surveillance, including armed guards. In the phosphate camps, "crackers," poor Southern whites originally worked the lowest positions. White employers eventually brought in out of state blacks with most of the white men working salaried, supervisory positions. Blacks and whites lived in the labor camps together, but their children were sent to different schools, the whites traveling within one mile, the blacks four to six miles.

Georgia lumber and sawmill businesses used ten-year contracts with peons as well as convict labor. Peons are workers held against their will. Many immigrants were recruited to work in such labor camps, some directly from Ellis Island (Jones, 1998). Most convicts were black many convicted for loitering, petty theft as well as more violent crimes. Descriptions of lumber and other work camps made the housing seem inhumane.

The more remote camps usually had bleaker living quarters and made it more difficult to escape. Some didn't escape simply because the surrounding were too harsh or dangerous. Yet, some enjoyed the more social aspects of camps and company towns after the isolating farm. White men intruding into black life in small company towns enjoyed a life that was not acceptable within their own communities–gambling, drinking, prostitution. There were black resistance to this intrusion (Jones, 1998).

Rural non-agricultural work was gender segregated. Farm families were not as used to the extreme gender segregation of labor that was often imposed in the lumber and other camps. Women spent more time away from male partners or in the company of women neighbors. Families no longer worked as a unit as they did during sharecropping.

Immigration to the industrial North

Between 1900 and 1914, Italian, Yiddish and Slavic immigrants numbered almost nine million (Brody, 1980). Immigrants continued to flood the U.S., especially in the Northern states. With the exception of the Irish, most male immigrants outnumbered the female immigrants at least five to three (Seller, 1994). While the Jews had fled because of persecution and intended to settle, many Italian and Slavic workers were male peasants who hoped to earn enough money to return home and buy land for their families.

Women usually immigrated for the same reasons as men but once here, found lower paid work in different occupations or in less "skilled" positions, e.g. in clothing, men usually held the higher status, better paid position of "cutter." Three quarters of women in industry were immigrants or first generation and were primarily French Canadian, Poles, Jews and Italians. Half of the domestics were immigrants and were primarily Irish, German and Scandinavian. Jews and Italian, women and men, worked in sweat shops in the tenement districts of New York and Chicago (Brody, 1980). Among male

immigrants, Italians, Greek and Slavic workers started on the bottom rungs of industry

(Kraut, 1982). Many Slavic men also worked in the mines and Italian and Greek men

preferred other outdoor work. During depressions when the work slowed, many

immigrant men returned home, some returning every summer for work.

Some of these workers , however, came to settle. Single Italian women from Sicily

worked as tobacco strippers in the Ybor City cigar industry near Tampa, Florida

(Mormino & Possetta, 1991). Another group of Greek immigrants worked in the sponge

industry in nearby Tarpon Springs, Florida (Kraut, 1982). Settlement in the South was

unusual, however, as workers were usually recruited from the South to labor northward.

Southern migration northward

Within the first two decades of the twentieth century, for the first time, half of all

Americans lived in urban areas. In the South, blacks first migrated to local urban areas

and by 1900, revitalized the northern exodus, looking for wage work other than the

Southern camps which still smacked of forced labor. A study of black migration (Jones,

1992) found that sons of men who already had the respect of whites had to earn that

respect for themselves. Those fathers who wanted the best for their sons sent them away

to be successful as their own success could not be inherited or recognized by whites.

The origins of large-scale black migration stemmed from the recruiting efforts of the

Pennsylvania and Erie Railroad to hire black male workers for the summer of 1916

(Jones, 1992). Railroad recruiters targeted two migration routes. The eastern migration

route targeted Florida and Georgia cities to work in New York and Philadelphia. The

western migration route targeted the Alabama and the Mississippi delta to work in

Cleveland, Milwaukee and Chicago. Henry Ford also sent scouts south to hire blacks,

especially as white men left for war leaving factory jobs vacant. As family members

paved the way, others followed for more "unskilled" jobs in the largest cities which nonetheless often paid four to seven times higher their current wage (Amott & Matthaei, 1996). By 1927, 1.2 million blacks had fled to the North.

Jacqueline Jones (1992) in her book *The Dispossessed* discusses the "gumption" and determination of black pioneers who led the migrations to Northern cities. Many women left to escape sexual harassment and abuse from white men. These women moved into domestic service in Northern white homes as Swedish and Irish women married or found better paid positions. Migration also increased burdens on the kinship systems that were left behind in the South, especially on the women folk.

Leaving the South did not mean an end to racism and segregation, however. In 1915, a popular movie *Birth of a Nation* depicting cruel black rulers cruelly treating innocent and helpless whites, fanned the embers of racism in the North (Axinn & Levin, 1975). As blacks and whites, immigrants and nativists, both women and men competed for jobs, racial riots erupted in places like East St. Louis in 1917 and Chicago in 1919. In the 1920s, 3400 mines closed in Appalachia and people began to move north to Chicago steel, Akron rubber or Detroit auto plants (Jones, 1992). The migration of Southern whites also brought the Southern brand of racialized notions into the workplaces to add to the Northern brand (Brody, 1967). Over 1.3 million white rural Southerners relocated during the first 30 years of the century but most tended to congregate in Southern cities or move West. Appalachian migration, however, was often within traveling distance to Midwestern cities so people could frequently visit kin. Between 1910 and 1960, 9 million people of all races left the South, whites slightly out numbering blacks (Jones, 1992).

Automation

By 1913, technological advances of faster driven, more precise and automatic power tools combined with more organized layout, e.g. the moving assembly belt, transformed the industrial workplace (Brody, 1980). The 1893 depression had resulted in mergers of smaller plants with larger operations. Textile workers experienced this earlier; now garment and miners were being changed over. Trades such as construction were not effected. With increased production, the American business community reorganized (Katz, 1986/96). Scientific means were applied to industrial management and industrial engineers were hired as consultants to streamline operations (Lamphere, 1987).

Fredrick W. Taylor studied the typical shop floor and observed that the power of information and pace of labor lay with the workers. To increase efficiency, he suggested that the skill knowledge and the control of the pace of work needed to be wrested from the individual workers on the production line and given to supervisors. Breaking the work into smaller production units kept workers from learning the entire operation, creating more of a dependence on management and a de-skilling of labor. In turn, supervisors would hire the appropriate person for each job who would follow standardized rules and an expected piece rate of production. Workers didn't need to think or understand where they fit into the "bigger picture" to be more productive. Their work became routine and many workers lost their pride and connection to their product. "Fordism" as it eventually came to be known, dominated manufacturing as mass production of "cheap, uniform commodities" were created by an assembly line of workers, each responsible for small, detailed labor and supervised by a hierarchy of management (Crompton, 1998).

Many workers resisted this centralization of industry and de-skilling which effectively limited social mobility (Wilensky & Lebeaux, 1958/1965). Remaining "skilled" jobs

garnered higher status. Many industries capitalized on this new status by formalizing and naming these new, more specialized positions under the guise of scientific management for the purpose of appeasing the dominant unions that were organized by a trade or craft model (Piven & Cloward, 1977).

These status and territorial distinctions created identity association with the job specialty, competition among the crafts, no right to voice for the masses of scorned "unskilled" workers, divisions among the workers and alliances with the power (the industry) that conferred and rewarded these status distinctions. Higher status, better paid jobs were awarded to white males (usually native-born and Protestant Christian). This accentuated the racial, gender, national/ethnic, religious, able and age divisions. Racial and immigrant groups of different nationalities were intentionally manipulated to compete against one another to create unstable divisiveness (Piven & Cloward, 1977).

In the textile industries, two tactics called the speedup and the stretchout made life more arduous and dangerous for workers (Lamphere, 1987). These tactics resulted from time and motion studies suggesting workers could be responsible for more machines as the machine speed increased. With textile manufacturing burgeoning in the South, to pay for the new machinery, owners reduced wages. This forced workers to accept the wage cut or look elsewhere for work, leaving the position open to newer immigrants, eager for the opportunity to work. Nonetheless, many workers resisted.

Renewed labor resistance

In spite of negative publicity associated with the Haymarket Affair, workers still continued to protest their dreary, dangerous and poorly paid working conditions. Labor organizing was met with increasing brutality and swift governmental response. Between 1902-1904, almost 200 strikers were killed and another 2000 wounded. Many poor,

working-class and oppressed groups were reluctant to create coalitions with other oppressed groups across racial-ethnic, class and at times, gender lines (hooks, 1993). This caution stemmed from the historical struggle that oppressed groups had with one other over limited resources such as land, jobs, housing, educational monies, etc.

Because those in power are more threatened when oppressed groups form coalitions, it was in the best interest of those more privileged to support competition, hatred, and status among these groups to encourage a more compliant and "grateful" labor force. Preferential status was ranked according to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, etc. Blacks, for example, never supervised white workers. Women never supervised men. Both were paid less for the same work that white men did. Black women especially, oppressed both by gender and race, were denied access to decent work and pay. While their brothers might have more appalling physical conditions to work in, these women also struggled with sexual harassment by their white, male employers.

Competition among wage laborers from different groups is common in U.S. history. Established immigrants have been reluctant to support and even resentful of newer immigrants, except from one's family or home village, who threatened to take available jobs, often for less money. In Rhode Island mill towns, Irish, French-Canadian, Portuguese, Polish, and working-class English immigrants worked both cooperatively and against one another in a mill social hierarchy that reflected society outside. The Irish for several generations were at the bottom of this hierarchy (Lamphere, 1987) until black and Italian laborers replaced them in the early 1900's.

Groups of poor and oppressed people succeeded at times in overcoming the obstacles to create very strong coalitions of resistance. Many of these have been documented in

Frances Fox Piven's and Richard Cloward's (1977) *Poor People's Movements: Why they succeed and how they fail.* As it is those who are in a more privileged position who write history, there is little in the history books about the breadth of slave revolts, labor strikes, draft riots, suffrage demonstrations and other forms of resistance for fear that this might incite further revolt.

Women worked together for labor reforms across racial and ethnic lines. Yet, white woman also excluded and even caused riots rather than work with their black or other immigrant sisters. Women's labor resistance tends to be overshadowed by the militancy of their fathers and brothers (Lamphere, 1987). Women were often active participants in organizing strikes and walking the picket lines. However, they were less likely to join unions than their male counterparts and were less likely to participate in violent resistance although they were often bloodied and fought back when attacked.

The power of women's political muscle was demonstrated when an unusual group of women workers spontaneously organized in New York in 1902. Most of these workers were married, had large families and the average age was thirty-nine. These unpaid Jewish homemakers successfully boycotted the rise in kosher beef (Hyman, 1991). In 1909, in another strike that lasted three months, there was an uprising of twenty thousand workers, mostly women, in the New York garment district. After its success, thousands joined the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), providing a coalition among the many shops and improved job conditions (Sacks, 1984). Unfortunately, in 1911, for 146 mostly Jewish and Italian immigrant women at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, those reforms did not stop them from being burned to death when a fire broke out on the ninth floor. Their employer locked the exit door to stop union organizing

(Seller, 1994). A major woman's strike occurred in 1912 in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the "Bread and Roses" strike of women textile workers. This slogan, used since in other labor strikes, was immortalized in James Oppenheim's poem "hearts starve as well as bodies, give us bread but gives us roses" (Amott & Matthaei, 1996).

From the ashes of the Haymarket Affair and its connection to the demise of the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor led by Samuel Gompers strove to weave together the remaining organized labor groups. Gompers view was to make the AFL "The" labor union. In reality, the AFL was a series of unions of specialized trades, e.g., the carpenters union, that had national memberships as well as local units. These trade unions initially had a lot of power in various industrials because they sought to regulate entry into their ranks and a particular workplace by excluding rivals from being allowed to practice their particular craft. Considered more skilled in their trades, they regulated the training process of apprentices. In turn, they fought for decent wages and working conditions for those more skilled workers. Many of the members of these unions were nativists and the earlier European immigrants who had been in the country for several decades. Often excluded were those who were less desirable skills, for example, the agrarian skills of blacks, later immigrants, women, and children. Many of the wage reforms did not necessarily include the needs of these latter groups.

Gompers sought to bring together this collective of trade unions to fight for some of the pressing reforms: an eight hour day, compensation for workers injured on the job, old age pensions, decent wages. In general, the workers at the AFL were white male, skilled and non-immigrant. Samuel Gompers spoke out against women competing with "heads

of families" by taking "their" positions in industry. In 1906, he also spoke of women's responsibility to be in the home (Sidel, 1986b).

For a short time, some management associations sought the public's and the union's favor by seeking to meet some of union demands and avoid bloodshed. Gompers philosophy was to fight to improve working conditions by the path of "least resistance" (Brody, 1980, p. 24). He initially maintained a focus on specific economic issues and was non-partisan. By 1906, Gompers abandoned non-partisan politics and led this collective of trade unions to endorse the Democratic candidate for president. From that time, the AFL, representing more white, native-born and "skilled" workers, became more associated with business. Gompers and the union's "least resistance" included being closely connected to the National Civic Federation, an association of financiers and industrialists, including an AFL vice-president being acting NCF president.

Eventually management tired of increasing union demands and began to follow a philosophy of scientific management to increase worker productivity. The goal was to eventually undermine the power of the trade unions by centralizing middle management authority and skills knowledge. The AFL eventually supported this management move. The manufacturers did its own internal surveillance investigations with "insiders" who helped maintain a current blacklist of labor agitators. Corporations began a series of impressive court victories that forced striking laborers to return to work and in some cases, punished them by making them even pay for costs caused by their walkouts.

In contrast, the International Workers of the World (IWW) or the Wobblies as they were called, sought to unite all workers together and championed the causes of the most "miserable" of workers and conditions (Brody, 1980, p. 37). Many who comprised the

Wobblies were members of the Socialist party and labor radicals, especially those of the Western Federation of Miners who survived a series of bloody strikes in the Western mountain states. Leaders such as Big Bill Heyward, Mother Mary Jones and Vincent St. John encouraged direct action by all workers. Direct action meant that the local strike was controlled by the workers effected, not by outside union leaders. This included defying the law if necessary and response, not initiation, to violent opposition by armed resistance. Some of their resistance included pushing for right to assembly and free speech in Spokane, Washington, in 1909 and Fresno, California, in 1911, increased pay for woolen workers, mostly immigrants, in Lawrence, Massachussetts in 1912 (Zinn, 1980). The Wobblies were increasing their membership and gaining some victories as the country entered World War I.

Their energy, their persistence, their inspiration to others, made them an inspiration to the country far beyond their numbers. They traveled everywhere (many were unemployed migrant workers); they organized, wrote, spoke, sang, spread their message and their spirit. They were attacked with all the weapons the system could put together: the newspapers, the courts, the police, the army, mob violence (Zinn, 1980, p. 324)

Empire

As the Twentieth Century dawned after the Depression of 1893, class unrest, and fears of "mongrelization of the white race" (Cox, 2002), the prevailing mood of capitalists and politicians was the need for market expansion and control outside of the United States. While internally, Americans feared the "yellow peril," many powerful people regretted not getting a piece of the Chinese market after China was weakened by its war with Japan in 1897. President Theodore Roosevelt confided to a friend in 1897, "I should welcome almost any war, for I think this country needs one" (Zinn, 1980, p. 290). By 1894, the

U.S. had intervened 103 times in the affairs of other countries to protect "American interests" (Zinn, 1980). Newspapers, not surprisingly, reflected similar appetites, declaring that the U.S. had the "taste of Empire" (p.292) in its mouth.

While American exports exceeded its imports, second only to Britain, the U.S. was still a debtor nation, paying off many European investor loans. Cotton, oil, steel, and agricultural surplus sought new markets. Many racialized this desire, rationalizing it was the manifest destiny of the U.S. to dominate the world. Indeed, Roosevelt believed it was the duty of the "right type" (i.e. whites) to leave behind their blood and wished he could prevent the "wrong people" from breeding (Cox, 2002). Post-Colonial feminists would say this desire was sexualized. It was also classist because Roosevelt and others had little regard for whites of "inferior" breeding, preferring upper-class white "blue-bloods."

The Spanish (Cuban)American War

With the Cuban's fighting a war of independence against Spain, the U.S. seized an opportunity. Because Cuba was in America's "back door," money could have been sent to aid the nationalists without committing troops. Yet, two fears prevented this course of action. First, the Cuban rebels might win without U.S. aid, closing a potential door and market, and two, a second nation with potential black leadership could occur along with Haiti (Zinn, 1980). In February, 1898, the U.S. destroyer *Maine* mysteriously exploded in the Havana harbor and sank with 268 aboard. The business community was eager for opportunities. Before the declaration of War, most labor organizations spoke out against intervention, realizing that it was young, working-class laborers who would fight. Several noted that similar loss of life in labor disputes and industrial accidents did not stroke the same public hysteria. While many supported the cause of the rebels, they wondered at U.S. intentions of intervening in the war (Zinn, 1980). Many had no choice

but to be supportive after war was declared. Over 5500 U.S. soldiers died in the conflict, less than 400 in combat deaths. Most died of disease including yellow fever and food poisoning from old U.S. food rations from Armour meats (Zinn, 1980). When Spain surrendered, U.S. officials outrageously would not allow Cuban representatives to witness the signing in spite of their indignant protests.

The Philippines

Cuban mining, sugar, and railroad interests were soon in U.S. hands. As terms of the surrender, Spain ceded Puerto Rico, Guam and sold the Philippines to the U.S. In 1901, the U.S. brutally massacred over twenty thousand Filipinos in an effort to subdue the island. Race again was a justification as the brown Filipinos were considered savages. With President Theodore Roosevelt's support, General Jacob Smith attempted to turn the Philippines into a "howling wilderness" and told his troops, "I want no prisoners; I want you to kill and burn; the more you will kill and burn, the better it will please me" (Cox, 2002). Recognizing the racism, black U.S. soldiers were in terrible quandaries. Many wrote to family members and black community newspapers; others deserted. With so much hate and so little compassion, America entered the Twentieth Century.

World War I

Employers fought strong worker resistance trying to implement "Fordism" until World War I when immigration slowed and male laborers left to fight, causing high turnover and a labor shortage. Production initially dropped, but patriotism provided the necessary stimulus to encourage the remaining workers to increase production for the war effort. Newly hired workers were socialized into the new work system. Recent male agrarian immigrants had little industrial experience and planned to work for only a short duration. They were less concerned with the conditions and more focused on having steady work.

Southern blacks were grateful for the opportunity for steady employment, although concerned about the conditions. Management took advantage of this decrease of organized resistance to increase discipline and surveillance. "The worker was being reduced to a cog in the great wheel of productive enterprise' (Brody, 1980, p. 14).

Women in the labor force

During World War I, women replaced men in factories and business offices and kept the nation going. However, only 5% of new workers "abandoned" hearth and home for the war effort. In general, there was more reshuffling of women within occupations (Hesse-Biber,& Carter, 2000). Some 10,000 women served in auxiliary military positions and several thousand in civilian clerical capacities (Hartmann, 1980). White women's employment declined in domestic occupations and increased in office work, manufacturing, sales, teaching, nursing and telephone communications. Fewer jobs were available to African-American women; many of these were very menial and dangerous.

The family wage did not depend as much on the husband and older children as on both parents. The informal economy of home-made or grown products as well as the practice of boarding laborers was ending as more families bought more commercialized products such as produce, canning, baking, and clothing increasing costs. Towards the end of the war, more clerical and sales opportunities were opening up for white women as industry began to slow down its hiring of women. Families who depended on women's wages began to express discontent about the inadequacy of that wage (Hargreaves, 1980).

By the end of World War I, the significant trend of a surplus labor supply escalated as agricultural and manufacturing technology decreased the need for labor power. White women who had replaced men in more prestigious factory and business were forced by layoffs and social pressure to vacate their jobs for men. There was only a five percent

overall increase of women in the labor market after the war (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000). With African American women entering domestic service on the East Coast, most women were employed in domestic service, mill work, agriculture, sales, transportation, clerical and professional work, especially teaching children or nursing. The latter two white-collar occupations were generally held by white, nativist women, not immigrants or people of color (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000). Although women won the right to vote after a long struggle with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, their right to an equitable wage or victory against job discrimination was yet to come.

Many black men left the South for the North after serving in WW1 even though government officials had purposely de-enlisted these men in Southern cities (Jones, 1992). While war had opened up new jobs for black women, by 1920, three quarters were still farm laborers, domestic or laundry workers (Sidel, 1986). As birth rates soared and infant and child mortality slowed, the number of job applicants increased, leaving the least socially privileged unemployed or with the least desirable and most dangerous work and pay (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000). As low paid and unemployed workers crowded together in urban areas, capitalists feared labor unrest (Katz, 1986/1996).

One year after the war, a non-violent general strike led by 100,000 workers shut down the city of Seattle, Washington. The strike was very organized, fed the populace, and delivered other necessary services with a strict prohibition against any weapons. Supported by the local people, demands were met after five days. Against the backdrop of many strikes throughout the country, worker agitation in Europe as well as the Russian Revolution, this peaceful "revolution" frightened those in power. Many strikes following were met with a more brutal response to break the cycle of protests (Zinn, 1980).

Immigrant and activist backlash

During the war, immigrants of many nationalities had been targets of hatred and violence. With over 50,000 American dead in a war that no longer many sense, Americans began looking for scapegoats (Zinn, 1980). Many German towns had changed their names and some Germans had altered their surnames. In 1917, a law had been passed that required all immigrants over 16 years old to be literate thereby closing the doors of American freedom to the most destitute.

After a period of intense labor unrest in 1919, a series of bombs and attempted bombings targeted industrialists and some political figures. Immigrants who had been involved in labor activism as well as any Communist party members were blamed. Fearful that the recent Russian Revolution will be repeated in the U.S., many middle class Americans sanctioned "alien," Socialist and Communist targeting in the name of patriotism and security. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and his assistant J. Edgar Hoover vowed to rid the country of these radicals immigrants and traitors who threatened the nation. They started a campaign of "cleaning up" these elements (Kraut, 1982).

Two names stand out as symbols of both government's and business's mood and the public's fear regarding immigrants and labor organizing. In 1920 Nicola Sacco and Bartalomeo Vanzetti, two Italian immigrants who also were labor activists, were arrested, tried and found guilty of murder of a shoe company manufacturer although there was little proof of their involvement. The judge sentenced these "anarchist bastards" to death (Kraut, 1982, p.170). Amidst world-wide protest suggesting nativist hysteria, their execution was postponed for seven years. Many regarded them as innocent martyrs.

By 1924, un-employment increased nativist prejudice, resulting in pressure for more restricted immigration. As capitalist America was able to meet its own production needs

with native born workers, immigration of all but the most elite and desirable whites was squeezed shut (Katz, 1986/1996). No longer needed by business, in 1921 the first federal immigration quotas were enacted. Those immigrants who remained found work in factories, as domestics and most lived in urban settings. In addition to Germans, Russians, and any other immigrants involved in labor organizing, the Japanese community also suffered from this immigration backlash as well as previous racism..

Japanese-Americans

The earliest Japanese were male students who immigrated in 1880, followed by male laborers around 1890 (Ichioka, 1991). By 1905 after series of racist newspaper articles in San Francisco, the California state legislature voted to exclude Japanese immigrants. By 1906, in San Francisco, the authorities segregated the Japanese school children from the other children. Japanese assimilated very rapidly, including many adopting Christianity, clothing, housing, etc. Although excluded from the other labor organizations, they had been successful in collective bargaining agreements. Many were beginning to buy agricultural lands and were competing with nativist Americans in that arena. (Segal, 1967). With ability to buy land, many Japanese sent for wives in order to settle rather than return to Japan. Some of these women were already married to the immigrants. Others were sought when the immigrants returned to Japan briefly to find wives. Because this risked potential military service, many men married through a betrothal arranged by families (Ichioka, 1991). Prospective bridegrooms sent pictures and information about themselves and their situations. Bridegrooms were often absent from the ceremony and pictures were sent of the bride. Japan was concerned about prostitution. In order to control this, Japanese assured American authorities that they would restrict and at times, exclude all laborers from immigrating. The belief was that

prostitutes came primarily from the laboring class, and by excluding male and female laborers, and encouraging marriage, prostitution would cease.

By 1915, any immigrant who saved $800 dollars could arrange for a marriage (Ichioka, 1991). This excluded the poorest. Laborers saved for years and sent for women who might not be considered good marriage prospects because of material circumstances or "beauty" in Japan. Some grooms sent altered photos of themselves as younger men to attract brides as well as exaggerated or lying about their circumstances. Many grooms were older. Brides oftentimes found their new lives harsh and oppressive. Some disillusioned and desperate, deserted their husbands (Ichioka, 1991). Because of the watchdog eye of many Japanese associations, it was necessary to settle in non-Japanese areas to avoid detection, a lonely and possibly dangerous prospect with white racism.

In 1913, in spite of outrage from Japan, the California Alien Land Act excluded all foreign-born Japanese from owning land. In 1920, the Japanese were banned from putting the land in their children's or sympathetic white's names. Many Japanese flourished on contracted land or unwanted wastelands in spite of this oppression. Japan in 1919 tried unsuccessfully to encourage the League of Nations to adopt a resolution supporting racial equality in all nations (Segal, 1967). The same year, against the wishes of immigrants, the Japanese government had prohibited picture bride marriages to quiet U.S. nativists who used the practice as an example of religious barbarianism (Ichioka, 1991). After a devastating earthquake in Tokyo, the 1924 exclusionary immigration act further barred all Japanese immigration until after World War II.

Depression and Welfare

The decade before the Great Depression saw the height of production, a profitable time for business. Many workers continued to labor in low paid, dangerous and difficult

jobs. Nonetheless, some labor concessions were made. The growth of male dominated industrial employment paralleled increasing social protections, especially for women, children, the aged and others associated with the welfare state (Crompton, 1998). This became known as welfare capitalism.

Two labor "victories" undermined a strong position for women in wage labor. The family wage assumed men as heads of heterosexual households with the women in a subordinate, child-care giving role. It created the expectation that men should earn sufficient money to alone support their families. This meant women, presumably as non-household heads, could be paid inadequate wages to discourage them from working outside the home. Thus manufacturers' desire to pay women poor wages was supported by the culture and reflected in labor, most men's and some women's expectations.

The second reform was "protective" legislation that focused exclusively on providing safe working conditions for women. This labor "victory" while acknowledging the unique situation of risk to unborn children of potentially pregnant women, assumed that all white women were weak, delicate and physically inferior to men. Women, therefore, needed extraordinary working conditions such as shortened working hours, and were denied access to certain jobs that were considered "unladylike" (such as alcohol sales) or dangerous to women. This supported the idea that it was women's primary responsibility to take care of the home and children. While it did provide some relief for women working under this assumption, it did not challenge this idea. (Sidel, 1986). It also hurt men by taking the issue of safe working conditions for all off the table.

Meanwhile unions and social reformers lobbied for other worker benefits by extolling the advantages to industry of decreasing the periodic unemployment patterns that were a

staple of the working-class's life. By meeting some of the worker's needs for their families such as housing, more stable employment, worker's compensation for disabled and maimed workers, manufacturers could utilize worker loyalty to increase production and discourage labor unrest. This was a period of growth for industrial company towns. If worker were not productive, they would be dismissed. During times of decreasing productivity, the business felt little responsibility to the workers.

Another "reform" that union organizers were able to get was the shorter working day. This management bargaining chip was exchanged for what was known as the "speed-up." Essentially, this meant that the day would be shorter but the intensity of production would "speed-up." This would exclude from production workers who were not able to keep up with the majority. These workers, especially the very young, the disabled and the elderly, would be dropped from the production line.

By agreeing to the "speedup" union officials effectively undercut the rights of older workers and forced workers into unpaid retirement. The eight-hour working day was heralded as a response to unemployment. By each laborer working fewer hours, the theory was that management could hire new workers for the surplus hours. However, in the decade before the stock market crash, while the overall number of industrial workers remained constant, production increased 53% (Axinn & Levin, 1975).

Societal institutions were needed to contain and divert unemployed, idle workers. Retirement became a social institution that would divert less productive elderly workers. Child labor was declining because of three factors: increased labor supply, progressive legislation pushing for their safety and public school education. Schools would provide a transitional location for children no longer needed in the labor force. It would provide

the necessary socialization to make more productive workers as well as service workers for the various jobs of industrial society. It would socialize lower class, racially non-white and new immigrants into good patriotic citizens who would support order, the status quo, and are willing to defend the country against aggressors. Welfare would contain worker dissent not by providing an adequate standard of living but rather as a supplement to an inadequate wage (Wright, 1997). Prisons and increasing numbers of mental and other institutions were built to contain other disruptive workers.

> The culture of capitalism measures persons, as well as everything else, by their ability to produce wealth and by their success in earning it; it therefore leads naturally to the moral condemnation of those who, for whatever reasons, fail to contribute or to prosper. It also mystifies the exploitative relations that allow some to prosper so well as the expense of so many. (Katz, 1989, p.7)

Profit was the prime motivator for the Progressive Era reforms. Many were applicable only to industry and not to agricultural, domestic and other service-related workers, thus excluding many blacks, immigrants and poor white farm laborers (Axinn & Levin, 1975). "Both Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson worried about the spirit of a nation lost to the swinenishness of its appetite" (Lapham, 1988). Nonetheless, under their presidential administrations, industry and banking prospered with little regard and only minor concessions for workers.

The Mellon Plan

By the twenties, the possessors of great wealth found it necessary to acquire newspapers and hire public relations people to sanitize their lives. The American public in the late nineteenth century believed that "behind every great fortune stands the brooding presence of a great crime" (Lapham, 1988, p.132), i.e. robber barons (Josephson, 1934/1995). "The pit" of acquisition was hygenized into the "free

market"system (p.133). Two types of books were created to mythologize greed: the tract which taught how to get rich and the fairy tale which told the blameless and miraculous acquisition of wealth. Both were created to connect the common "man" with the rich. The message was clear: for those who work hard enough, anything were possible.

Keeping up appearances became a very important virtue (Lapham, 1988). Their heirs had the "captains of industry" pose for portraits or if deceased, had one made up to show. Yet, riches in other ways was played down, to suggest a connection with the "common man." To be casual ... was everything–a manner that implied fluidity, grace, ease, absence of commitment, urbanity, lack of sentiment, indifference to the rules, and courage under circumstances always ironic. The style discouraged enthusiasm on the ground that it exposed a person to the risk of failure (Laphman, 1988, p. 18).

Affluence had its drawbacks, especially for women and children. Some rich women felt like political prisoners; they were expected to maintain a "decorum of silence" never exposing or putting pressure on the men in their family (Lapham, 1988, p. 29). The role was as manager of the various homes and properties, socializer of the children, public symbol in society and charitable events. In turn, they were paid through clothes, jewelry, servants, and high status through their husbands and possibly fathers. Many children felt they were not a central part of the home. They were prepared for a future role. Often cared for by nannies, governesses, and tutors or sent away to boarding schools or camps, many children felt a lack of connection (Lapham, 1988).

In 1923, Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew Mellon, one of the richest men in the world, presented a general tax cut plan to Congress to reduce income taxes because of "prosperity." While it cut taxes in half for the highest brackets, it only reduced the lowest

tax brackets by 1% (Zinn, 1980). Although opposed by the working-class, Congress passed the tax plan. Throughout this period, there continued to be worker strikes.

The "Great Depression"

Regular unemployment was part of the working-class's life, "extravagance and flamboyance" (Axinn & Levin, 1975) marked the rich, and credit-based consumer spending hallmarked the middle class during the Roaring Twenties. With the surplus of labor, an overvalued, speculative market, and obsolete government to deal with massive changes and help out the destitute, the unemployed began to despair as they experienced longer periods between employment without any financial relief and little governmental help. Forty percent of the population had no savings (Axinn & Levin, 1975).

The stock market crash of October 1929 intensified the decline and subsequent depression that lasted twelve years. Factories responded by "stretch outs" – intentionally long periods of unemployment, shortened hours, intensified production, and closing. Shortened hours and layoffs reduced the number of workers bringing home a paycheck to their families who were not able to survive (Lamphere, 1987). Many social workers, seeing the dismal conditions, believed that relief work was a public, governmental responsibility and personally felt a responsibility to reform the system. This, reinforced by the number of middle class and white-collar workers impacted by the Depression, challenged the belief that unemployment was due to personal deficiency. Social workers warned of the impending crisis to governments' deaf ear and optimistic rhetoric (Axinn & Levin, 1975). Many political leaders also began to see the desperation of their constituency and cautioned about possible revolt (Piven & Cloward, 1977).

When Hoover did respond, the strategy of economic recovery was to stimulate and bail-out failing business institutions. Nationally, the unofficial unemployment rate rose

to 25% overall, with 30% black unemployment. This was the highest in US history and reached into the lives of white-collar workers. Cities in particular were unable to deal with the massive unemployment (in some places 50 –80%) and resulting desperation. With an eroding tax base, large cities began defaulting on their debts and were unable to provide assistance. Many mill and factory workers protested the instability of their jobs. Blacks were laid off first, and then white women. Eventually, white men with more seniority were replaced with white women who worked for lower wages. Poor immigrants were scapegoated. Immigration had already been closed and now many workers were deported (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000). Tenant farmers were turned off the land, 28% black and 14% white, while early government programs aided large farmers to buy up idle farms because production costs were too expensive for the most destitute (Axinn & Levin, 1975).

In 1929, a series of textile strikes occurred in the South after five hundred women walked out of a mill in Tennessee after a stretch-out had been imposed. The strikes spread to North and South Carolina. Textile industries had fled south to skirt unionism and workers' protest of poor wages. They had been aided by the federal government who found it desirable to industrialize the South, breaking its dependence on an agricultural economic system. The industries were helped by the Southern ruling class who lost the war because of a lack of industrial development. While the other strikes were quelled with some concessions, the one thousand strikers in Gastonia, North Carolina, rebelled. These Southern working-class folks, black and white together, led by some Communist leaders, set up a tent colony to continue their siege, refusing to denounce their Communist leadership (Zinn, 1980) in spite of frequent arrests and violent skirmishes.

Bertha Hendrix, (1990) a striker, told her story of working twelve hour days for $12 a week and her decision to strike for an eight hour day and more pay. Her husband, a non-striker, sold drinks at the relief station. She claimed that one night the police came, and after a gun battle, the chief of police was killed. Her husband was among the people present who were arrested, tried, found guilty of murder, and eventually jailed. She claimed they were innocent and believed the police themselves shot their chief. In spite of the result, Hendrix felt it was an important action for the Southern labor movement to broadcast its working conditions throughout the country.

The symbol of any depression is large migrations in search of work. Millions of jobs were destroyed in the South with the mechanization of cotton picking and coal extraction as well as consolidation of companies. The sense of moral censure towards poor and working class women and men lasted until the middle class and other "deserving" groups began to be impacted by the Great Depression. The soup line and families turned out of their homes became the symbols of the middle class' worst fears. Small farmers wielding pitchforks protested low prices for their produce in towns scattered throughout the land. In 1932, thousands of unemployed World War I veterans and their families participated in the "Bonus March" on Washington, D.C. asking to receive their 1945 war bonus earlier. They chanted (Piven and Cloward, 1977, p. 52):

"Mellon blew the whistle, Hoover rang the bell, Wall Street gave the signal, And the country went to Hell."

Hoover sent federal troops to break up their encampment. To the public, the veterans represented the deserving unemployed. In 1934, one and a half million workers from different industries went on strike (Zinn, 1980). As prices fell, unemployment rose so

people with money prospered in contrast with the extreme poverty (MacLeod, 1980). The affluent feared the growing unrest, as the unemployed demanded assistance. Protests were met with violent repression and in some areas, marital law (Lamphere, 1987).

The general public was growing increasingly uneasy. Hoover had initially responded publicly to the crisis with optimistic, minimizing rhetoric. Now as unemployment rose, he responded to the "deserving" protesters with force. With presidential elections coming up, many were looking for someone with a strong, realistic plan and reassuring response. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, two-time governor of New York, was a confident and astute politician who had cut the state expenditures, created public works jobs for the unemployment, and provided relief for ten percent of the state's families (Conkin, 1967/1975). Promised rescuer of the "forgotten man," Roosevelt and the Democratic party upset and swept the elections of 1932 as blacks and the working-class turned away from the party of Lincoln (Piven & Cloward, 1977).

Roosevelt's New Deal

With cities unable to respond to the crisis and a national appeal to private charity woefully ineffective, Roosevelt's New Deal government swiftly responded with legislation, national reorganization and programs that addressed concerns at several levels. The Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) created an agency in 1933 for the destitute "unemployables" to develop programs which provided housing, food, medical services, education, recreation, and public service jobs. It provided matching funds directly to state and local governments, short-term work and longer-term public works employment (WPA) for the able-bodied. It required that social service workers distributing aid, even those loaned with private agencies, be considered public employees, dramatically impacting the social work profession (Axinn & Levin, 1975).

The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) was a mutual nod to business who it gave the right to fix prices and limit production (an easing of the anti-trust laws) and labor who it gave the promise of collective bargaining -Section 7 (a) and codes impacting hours and wages (Piven & Cloward, 1977). While it did not have much teeth, this governmental nod gave the workers the moral authority to act. Spontaneous strikes, sit-downs, and an explosive increase in union membership were the dramatic results.

With Roosevelt 's administration, financial assistance policy developed a philosophical division of government aid into social insurance and welfare; public opinion was that recipients of the former were deserving people and the latter, undeserving (Katz, 1989). Even reformers distinguished between the deserving and undeserving poor. One socialist wrote, "the poverty which punishes the vicious and the sinful is good and necessary . . . there is unquestionably a poverty which men deserve" (Katz, 1989, p.15). Not without its critics, the federal response was as a result of the fear of social unrest. As this pressure decreased, so did the federal aid (Feagin, 1975).

Social Security

One of the landmark pieces of legislation from the New Deal was The Social Security Act of 1935 that recognized the rights of certain citizens to financial benefits from the federal government. These citizens included the elderly who had worked, the disabled, the temporarily unemployed and children. It did not cover the elderly unemployed, which through the Townsend Movement, had rallied public support and lobbied for old age pensions (Piven and Cloward, 1979). It did not cover agricultural and domestic workers or those who have been chronically unemployed (Macdonald, 1971). While it encouraged adequate health services, it did not legislate mandatory insurance.

Pensions for the elderly were opposed by many influential groups but were supported both by the middle and working-class. Proponents argued benefits to elderly workers and their families had been given to veterans since the Civil War. Ultimately, it was the desire of industry to purge itself of under-productive elderly workers. This business desire combined with the privilege of the middle class who lobbied for retirement monies and helped many of the working-class address their concerns about the need for social insurance for older workers

With strong roots in the articulate, educated middle classes, old-age security broke lose from its earlier association with poor relief; forged ahead of every other kind of social insurance; and earned its privileged place as the only irreversible and untouchable welfare program in American history (Katz, 1986/1996, p.211).

This legislation also placed the responsibility of meeting the demonstrated needs of more destitute persons on the state. It thus divided federal "social insurance" programs for the deserving poor from the latter as state "public assistance" programs for the undeserving. Roosevelt represented the country's general opinion about aid to the "undeserving." Initially, white mothers with deceased or disabled husbands were not expected to be self-supporting (Beeghley, 1983). Eventually, as conceptions about women in general changed and "welfare" was racialized, aid to mothers with dependent children would be considered part of the second "undeserving" category.

By 1935, direct relief to states was dismantled because of the public's and FDR's belief that it fostered laziness, "weakening the moral fiber" (MacLeod, 1980, 24). After the withdrawal of FERA funds, in California, the "Bum Blocade" set up roadblocks to turn away unemployed people hundreds of miles from LA. The state legislature also

considered bills to fine, jail and bar vagrants from California. Voluntary monies were not sufficient to meet the demonstrated need of the vast sea of unemployed workers and their families (Axinn & Levin, 1975). Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) programs replaced direct aid with work aid (1935-1939). Harry Hopkins administered the program that was criticized for interfering with free enterprise. The United States, like England, forced their "bums," believed too lazy to work, to keep migrating to avoid burdening the system (MacLeod, 1980). In the South, blacks received smaller checks than whites and often were excluded from benefits (Jones, 1998). The American poor have required less coercion and less in social security guarantees to maintain their quiescence than has been true in other developed countries ... for the guilt and self-concepts of the poor have kept them docile (Murray Edelman cited in Piven and Cloward, 1977, p. 6).

The Wagner Act

Roosevelt was a politician. His rhetoric uplifted the deserving, suffering common man. His bark, which alienated many of the monied interests, did not have much bite, however. His wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, who had been involved with the Woman's Trade Union League, was pro-labor and interested in labor education (O'Farrell & Kornbluh, 1996). She was influential with her husband. Conflict over Section 7(a) of the NIRA led Roosevelt to form a National Labor Board to mediate disputes over alleged violations with Sen. Robert Wagner, a pro-labor advocate, as its head. Yet, this Board had no legal power. In 1935, Roosevelt signed the National Labor Relations Act, known as the Wagner Act. Though diluted from Wagner's original vision, this gave teeth to the promise made earlier to laborers regarding their right to organize and collectively bargain. Labor militancy increased and strikes doubled in two years. In 1937, two

million workers were involved in labor disputes. General Motors alone, led by the DuPonts and J.P. Morgan, spent almost a million dollars on espionage (Piven & Cloward, 1977). By 1938, although opposed by the AFL, Roosevelt supported the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, creating the first minimum wage (O'Farrell & Kornbluh, 1996). This act extended many of labor's earlier victories to some of the previously unprotected workers, protections such as a shortened work week and child labor restrictions s (Axinn & Levin, 1975). However, it still did not include migrant farm workers (McDonald, 1971) nor their minor children (O'Farrell & Kohnblum, 1996).

Many strikers were not union members and were striking for the right to organize a union. Although they flocked in droves to sign up, the AFL was reticent to support their strikes as this now mainstream union feared they would disrupt the delicate relationship the unions had forged with industry. Many strikers were "un-skilled" laborers: immigrant, blacks, women and other un-desirables such as Communist Party members who would often organize and lead the workers. The AFL assigned new members to different "local" organizations according to their specific job responsibility, based on management's scientific management. This would divide and weaken the solidarity of workers who had seized the moment and forged their relationships in the risk of a spontaneous labor action. Belatedly recognizing the AFL's reluctant tactics, many strikers allowed their memberships to expire while they continued to agitate for reforms.

John L. Lewis, a labor leader who recognized the power of the strikes and the extent of the unrest (Piven and Cloward, 1977), took the opportunity to break from the AFL with its craft unions. Lewis created a new labor organization based on industrial unions that represented all the job categories in a particular industry. He founded the Committee

of Industrial Organizations (CIO). The Labor Relations Board had worked to force industries to abandon yellow dog contracts, espionage and bargain collectively with the representatives recognized by the workers (Piven and Cloward, 1977). (A yellow dog contract, no longer legal, coerces employees to promise that they will not unionize.) Once the CIO organized its membership and was recognized by industry, like the AFL, it had a stake in disciplining its members and quelling spontaneous labor outbreaks.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward (1977) in their book, Poor People's Movements, presented a compelling argument that once organized, strikers lost their most potent economic weapon: the ability to shut down production by spontaneous outrage. The purpose of the government's labor policy was to create a code of conduct to force both sides to sit down at the bargaining table rather than depend on governmental troops to keep the peace. This was what the public wanted and would secure the most electoral votes. With organization, the strike movement peaked in 1938. Refrain from strikes was further guaranteed with industry-union contracts that included "no-strike" clauses.

Like scientific management with its principles of subjection to supervision, discipline, schedules and controlling of the line (Wilensky & Lebeaux, 1965), the unions co-operated in an isomorphic process that ripped the power and passion from the workers. Eventually, many of labor's hard fought-for rights, forged by the hunger, sacrifice and blood of many of the workers and their families, were slowly eroded in return for a steady and slowly increasing paycheck. Blacks particularly felt betrayed by Lewis and other organizers as traditionally "black" jobs were the first to be sacrificed in union deals,

especially as mine work became more mechanized. They soon fell away from the United Mine Workers and later, the mines (Jones, 1998).

Employed women during the Depression

Working-class women of whatever racial or ethnic persuasion have always been part of the labor force. During the depression years was no exception. Work was "part-time, seasonal, and marginal" (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000, p.34). Most woman, probably white, received a little more than half of what men, probably also white, were paid (Hargreaves, 1980). Women worked in clerical, communication, sales, factory, and domestic service jobs. Work for more privileged, educated women included nursing and teaching. During this time, the number of women who were non-traditional professionals such as doctors and teachers, especially administrators, declined (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000) as the cult of true womanhood pressured middle class white women to stay in "her place", stroking the home fires (Hargreaves, 1980).

During the depression, young married women without children stayed in the paid work force until they had children and older women returned to work. The prevailing social custom during industrialization was for the middle class and those working-class people who could afford to designate the man as the primary breadwinner. Many native-born white, immigrant women and some black women had worked a few years before marriage and then retired to domestic duties. Money earned as single women was called "pin-money" since it, from a middle class perspective, it did not support anyone but themselves (Hargreaves, 1980). Now many families depended on women's wages. More women headed their households as men migrated in search of employment (Jones, 1998).

Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed the first woman to a federal cabinet position as secretary of labor in his New Deal government, Frances Perkins. Ironically, in 1930

Perkins condemned the 'pin-money worker' as a "menace to society, a selfish short-sighted creature, who ought to be ashamed of herself" (Hargreaves, 1980, p.181). Working wives were considered the most selfish. In 1937, over 82% in a poll felt married women whose husbands could support them should not work. There was a federal law that prohibited the hiring of married women in public or governmental jobs if their husband was already employed there. This section 213 of the Economy Act was in effect until 1937 when women managed to have this appealed. Employed women became the focus of anger the first years of the Depression when men were fired because they were paid more than women co-workers. This eventually leveled off.

Women's participation in the work force changed over time. In the 1930's, twenty-nine percent of the female workforce was married; this increased to thirty-six percent. Regarding women over thirty-five in the workplace: in 1920, thirty-three percent of the total female work force was; by 1950, it increased to forty-three percent. In 1900, fifty-eight percent of the female work force was native born; by 1930, it rose to seventy-one percent. By 1940, native born women's participation was so common place that it was not reported. In the South by 1940, seven out of eight women workers were married with husbands present; in the nation, it was six out of seven. Also, fifty-six percent of married people were employed in low paying occupations. Wives needed to work, there was no other option. In spite of all these gains, by 1940 the same percentage of women were in the work force as in 1910 (Hargreaves, 1980). By 1941, Roosevelt issued Executive order 8802 which prohibited job discrimination based on race, creed, color or national origin (O'Farrell & Kornbluh, 1996). It did not include gender, social class or other social constructs used to discriminate.

War and the Affluent Society

World War II

In the early 1940's people from all over the country especially the South poured into California and other areas to work in wartime aircraft and shipbuilding industries (MacLeod, 1980). Blacks workers had a difficult time securing defense work until well into the war. Stories abounded how whites without experience were often picked for skilled jobs while blacks with more experience were left with unskilled positions (Jones, 1992). US government representatives and manufacturing companies such as Bell Aircraft preferred to hire white women to blacks of either sex. As government industries built in rural Southern areas, construction jobs might be open to blacks but maintenance and operation "inside" jobs were racialized, usually reserved for whites. Unsuccessful migrations for decent employment increased the likelihood of black families losing their land ties (Jones, 1992). As black fathers searched in vain after the promise of war-related employment, mothers and children were left behind to maintain the family farm with inadequate wages insufficient to pay for seeds and farm equipment. Many families abandoned their land to keep families together. Much of the meager wages for the low-status jobs that blacks were able to secure went to expensive, cramped and inadequate housing. Camp Blanding, in the northeastern part of Florida, was a construction camp. Almost 3,000 of the almost 20,000 workers lived in tents, many of these African American (Jones, 1992). A 1942 study in Atlanta revealed that the 43% black unemployment rate was almost nine times that of whites at 5% (Jones, 1992).

The war increased migration of other working-class groups as well. Appalachian migration intensified during that time with 2.5 out of 10 residents leaving the region. By 1970 as this migration mostly to the Midwest slowed, over 3.2 million white

Appalachians had moved away (Jones, 1992). Much grief and loss was associated with this migration and was intensified by the pressure on whites to assimilate and leave behind their cultural identity. There were also harsh contrasts between the crowded, noisy and dirty conditions of Detroit and the lush green Appalachian spaces. The specter of poverty and hunger looming pressured desperate people to leave behind even their preferred familiar life for the hope of a better future for their families.

Japanese-American interments

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in the spring of 1942, and partly in response to the fear of sabotage, Japanese Americans were rounded up and excluded from three West Coasts states: California, Oregon & Washington. Over one hundred and ten thousand people, two-thirds of them American citizens, were interned for the rest of the war in detention camps in the desert southwest and Alabama. A more likely reason for the internment than hysteria was the ability to gain access to Japanese-American lands since there had not been sabotage in Hawaii nor mass internment there (Segal, 1967).

While the financial loss to the Japanese-Americans was estimated to be $400 million, the greater loss was the assault on family life (Houston & Houston, 1973). Communal mess halls with poor nutritional and often spoiled food caused the "Manzanar runs." Sanitation was inadequate with communal toilets with no dividers. Wooden barracks were divided by blankets into sixteen family units. Oil stoves heated the barracks with each family sharing one communal living room size space to place their army-issued cots with two blankets. Family units were stressed by the lack of privacy from within and outside of the family as well as the strain on the family unit by children spending more times with their peer groups than the family. Many cultural customs were broken. These stresses were internalized and impacted families even after their release from the

internment camps. In addition, many younger family members who were U.S. citizens volunteered for military service, defense work and farm work camps to escape the dreadful conditions, resulting in physical separations of the families.

Post WWII years

After World War II, it was popular to describe the United States as the "Affluent Society" because of gains in education and technology, moving towards an automated society where leisure, not work would be how people spent their time. This was a distortion of reality or myopia that ignored or distorted significant social justice issues. One third of U.S. lived in poverty. Max Parker (1972) in *The Myth of the Middle Class* focused on the rejection of class terminology and "the insistence upon equality as a prominent characteristic of American (*sic*) society." John Kenneth Galbraith called those who acquired middle class status after WWII the "New Class," suggesting they generalized that experience to all (Parker, 1972). "If I can do it, anyone who puts their mind and back to it can!" White middle class Americans began to think of themselves as "heirs apparent" along with the privilege of consumption (Lapham, 1988, p. 31).

World War II had a significant impact on people's lives. The war had provided the usual stimulation to the economy that wars provide and during that time, production and employment increased. Many returning soldiers could not find employment. Soldiers, white, black and other people of color, had traveled beyond their homes and seen different parts of the U.S and the world. Many were not content to return to the status quo, especially unemployment, after what they had seen and experienced. Ex-soldiers migrated in search of a better life. The GI Bill helped alleviate some discontent while providing education and training for working-class men to fill the expanding middle

management and professional roles that were being created with industrialization. The G.I. Bill was a significant educational opportunity for black men (Jones, 1992).

The 1950's ushered in the decade of the greatest Southern migration to the North. Fifteen percent of Kentucky and West Virginia whites left while twenty-five percent of blacks from Mississippi and Alabama relocated in the North, usually following kin (Jones, 1998). Early in the century, 90% of blacks had lived in the South; by 1950, the population was divided between the two regions (Jones, 1998). Throughout the fifties, another ten percent of blacks left the South until the mid-sixties when heavy industries such as steel, rubber and cars declined in the North. With early involvement in the Vietnam War, coal production picked up again in the South (Jones, 1998).

Rosie the Riveter and her sisters

Women who had responded to their patriotic duties "to be like soldiers" and sacrifice for their country were not as fortunate. At the end of the war as in previous wars, there was tremendous pressure on women to be patriotic once again by leaving their positions for returning soldiers and provide more supportive functions behind the scenes. Rosie the Riveter and her sisters, who had supported the nation and their fighting men by womening the production lines, were given "pink slips" and told to go home. Single women like Ruth Small who loved her work in a paper mill chemistry lab (personal communication) were shifted to more traditional gender jobs, such as doing clerical work. To decrease surplus labor after the war, women who were not fired were again shamed into retreating from paid employment by advertising campaigns that told them they were taking production jobs away from America's true heroes who now needed employment. Others were subjected to sexual harassment.

The "feminine mystique" (Friedan, 1963) was created and supported by psychologists, social workers, educators, and journalists in an effort to convince women of their proper place: the home. These "experts" declared that families were women's biological fulfillment, and "women's employment during the war years had fostered certain individual neuroses and social maladjustment, which could be corrected only by return to domestic (and subordinate and dependent) status" (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000).

It is revealing to note that black and other women of color who took care of white middle class children and cleaned white homes and offices were not given the same moral messages to stay home and nurture *their* children. These children apparently were not the nations' priority nor were white men fearful that these wives and mothers of color would usurp the authority of their homes. It seems horribly ironic and shameful that many middle class women were silenced from protesting their own oppression by using the sweat, back breaking labor, long hours and resulting stress and impact on the health of working-class women and their families.

With the massive production and growth during the war, many feared the post-war economy and high unemployment. To counteract this fear, patriotic women were encouraged to renew and expand their roles as the primary consumers for their families of the new manufactured goods. Advertisements that supported a new middle-class lifestyle via a move to the suburbs encouraged wives to desire new labor saving devices and new items as markers of their new middle-class lifestyle (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000).

Jim Crow

Jim Crow was alive and well in the United States, especially in the South which continued to segregate public facilities such as schools, restaurants, bathrooms, hospitals, and buses. One thing had changed; more than a million blacks, women and men, had

served in WWII. Although the military had been segregated until 1948 when President Truman signed an executive order to desegregate, these GI's returned home determined to fight for the same liberties they had experienced abroad.

In Tennessee, James Stevenson, recently back from fighting, accompanied his mother Gladys to retrieve a radio from a local white repair store. When Stevenson protested poor treatment and turned to walk away, the clerk hit him over the head. Stevenson, a boxer in the service, punched out the clerk and threw him into the street. Whites were outraged at such treatment and gathered to teach Stevenson a lesson for violating "his place." Blacks, fed up with mistreatment, gathered together with guns,. When the whites appeared, to their surprise, the blacks fired on them. James Stevenson escaped on a northern-bound train. "Can you hear that train whistle blow? Sure wish that train wasn't Jim Crow." It was people like the Stevensons and their outraged communities that decided that Jim Crow had to go (Smith, Ellis, & Asianian, 2001, November).

The Struggle for Civil Rights

The culture of poverty

As the civil rights movement became stronger in the fifties and sixties, followed by welfare and other labor protest, the white nations' eyes were again trained by the public discourse to focus with fear on non-dominant groups, especially African Americans. This led to the "rediscovering of poverty" which was all too thinly "hidden" in the inner cities and rural areas behind the television's middle class icons of the affluent society. These middle class images portrayed the average white American family: with modern, comfortable, suburban ranch style home, two heterosexual, happily married parents, who flourished within the amusing battle of the sexes: a Donna Reed mother, Daddy Knows Best, a Dennis the Menace son, a compliant and pretty daughter (unnamed) and Lassie.

Images of social unrest, especially in "the decaying inner cities" (Jones, 1992) disturbed these popular cultural images and threatened the great white hope of security and an abundant lifestyle.

As academics such as Michael Harrington (1962) in *The Other America* and Oscar Lewis (1966) in *La Vida* began to use social science to popularize the plight of the poor, this inadvertently further collectively stigmatized the poor through the notion of a "culture of poverty" (Katz, 1989). Lewis, a cultural anthropologist, studied Mexican and Puerto Rican families. He first coined the phrase "culture of poverty" to portray the struggle of successive generations of families impacted by poverty. Michael Harrington wrote a book about U.S. poverty, intending to arouse the conscience of the nation to create some structural changes. Harrington focused on the struggles of those who suffered from poverty rather than emphasizing their strengths and resiliency. He, too, used Lewis' phrase to describe the effects of their plight. Frank Reissman (1962) wrote *The Culturally Deprived Child* about the struggles of economically underprivileged children and their failure to succeed in school.

The purpose of these writings by these social scientists was to arouse the American public to respond to the plight of those who were victimized by social inequality. They fell prey, however, to a more insidious side of classism and racism. While recognizing the injustices and injuries visited upon those who are oppressed in this society, these scientists did not highlight the subject agency, either individual or collective, that marked their resistance. This resistance may have been overt or indirect, using legal or other means. Resistance is often not acknowledged or labeled negatively. Perhaps to the degree that these scientists did recognize that resistance, they may have chosen to slant

their appeal to the "good will" of the white audience. By doing so, they played into the hands of those who were searching for a modern, scientific label to justify denial of economic aid and "moral" indignation against the "undeserving poor" (Katz, 1989). This use of science to legitimize economic exploitation was similar to what had happened in the nineteenth century with eugenics.

Michael Katz (1989), Jacqueline Jones (1992) and others pointed to the political uses of the "culture of poverty" in white, liberal thought. On the one hand, it advocates generous response to those who have been exploited by those who have prospered at their expense. It contains an insidious assumption that is pervasive in American society: the belief that working-class people in poverty are pathologically helpless, passive and dependent. Indeed, there are many that believe those experiencing poverty prefer it that way, choosing to be "self-destructive' (Jones, 1992, p. 291). The liberal response is to believe there is a need for active, caring, generous, and compassionate action to break *"the poor's"* cycle of "deprivation and degradation" (Katz, 1989, p.17). There is no acknowledgment that if the working-class did demonstrate active resistance, independence and power, many of these same liberals would justify brutal repression to put them back into their places. This was not a call to society to transform racist and classist structures that were the origins of deprivation, despair, and poverty.

By seeing working-class people as "culturally deprived" the liberals' "gaze" (Foucault, 1973) not only failed to incorporate the structures that actively strive to deprive, it failed to recognize the unique cultures that people from the working-class have, whatever racial or ethnic group. It denies people's agency. Such "deficit" thinking serves three purposes (Wax & Wax, 1964): (1) it places all responsibility for change

and/or failure on the working-class; (2) it justifies assistance of any quality that is offered since any resource is more than they presently have (beggars can't be choosers); and (3) it exonerates "helpers" or professionals from becoming culturally knowledgeable since there is an assumption that there isn't a vibrant culture.

Others in society benefit by focusing on the dependency, powerlessness and deprivation of the "poor" (Wax & Wax, 1964). By defining those caught in the web of poverty as passive and dependent, the role of religion, social science and its practitioners, including counselors and therapists, are enhanced. This "missionary" concept of rescuing the "poor" fits into the paternal assumptions that Americans have about many peoples and countries, especially in the so-called "Third World" (Katz, 1989). (This includes geographic areas in the U.S. such as the "inner city," reservations and Appalachia. Many jobs, professions, and programs are created out of the desire to "help the poor."

It is difficult to rally support to justify funds for services on behalf of those experiencing poverty. It is even more politically difficult to advocate for "outdoor relief" or monies directly given to working-class folks who live below a decent standard of living. The denial of services breaks down to a judgment of who is *deserving* and who is *undeserving*. To be *dependent* is to be morally and psychologically deficient, i.e. undeserving. Traced by Fraser and Gordon (1995) dependence changed from a social and economic category in pre-industrial society to a moral and psychological category in postindustrial society (Mills, 1996).

> American social scientists collectively seemed to sanction an image of poor people that denigrated their culture and personality, belittled their capacity for self-mobilization, and reinforced direct or indirect colonial rule. It offered them social work and therapy when they needed economic justice and political mobilization (Katz, 1989, p.17).

The idea that families passed on "maladaptive" strategies to each generation rather than society creating the oppressive conditions focused on the *family's* responsibility to change rather than *society's*. It ignored families' active agency. The desired result was little government intervention and a withdrawal of welfare support (Katz, 1989).

The "culture of poverty" was adopted by conservatives as a rationale for eliminating welfare. Their chief ally was Edward Banfield who believed many negative patterns were rooted in lower class culture who share a "distinct patterning of attitudes, values, and modes of behavior, rather than status, income level or occupation" (cited in Katz, 1989, p. 31). He did not recognize the diversity of cultures among poor, working-class people who were portrayed as "sub-humans" and who enjoyed "living like animals." Sex, adventure, deceit, and a present orientation took precedence over gainful employment. Welfare aided able-bodied, undeserving unemployed people who were "lazy parasites, ... have no morals ... and have flocks and flocks of illegitimate children so that they can collect more money" (Waxman, 1977, p.90).

These beliefs were reflected in popular culture as a Los Angeles survey demonstrated (Feagin, 1975): lack of thrift, effort, and ability were given as the main explanations for poverty. Focusing on the culture of poverty or the "underclass," was a way to divert attention away from The Rust Belt and other areas where whites worked hard and still didn't fulfill the "American Dream" (Jones, 1992). As corporate America began to abandon these traditional manufacturing areas for the non-unionized and unregulated southern Sunbelt, a smokescreen was needed to deflect potential outrage. There was no call for accountability to corporations that exploited the poor and their communities and when no longer valuable, threw them away in contempt as "the profits enjoyed by a few

have been extracted from the toil of many" (Jones, 1992, p. 271). The scapegoat and smokescreen became African Americans in the inner city.

As African Americans became visible, powerfully asserting their rights, their very visibility was used against them. The responsibility for poverty again became displaced on the stereotyped "unworthy" individual rather than an oppressive and exploitative society. As Michael Katz (1989) pointed out in his book, *The Undeserving Poor,* Americans failed to develop a language of social class that includes "both economics and community" (p.8). Rather than speaking of "inequality, power, and exploitation" this social class discourse focuses on the intentional blurring of morality and identity.

Conventional classifications of poor people serve such useful purposes. They offer a familiar and easy target for displacing rage, frustration, and fear. They demonstrate the link between virtue and success that legitimates capitalist political economy. By dividing poor people from each other and failing to link their frustrations, fears, and powerlessness to those of the middle class, such discourses prevent people's rage from coalescing into a powerful, unified, and threatening political force. "Stigmatized conditions and punitive treatment are powerful incentives to work, whatever the wages and conditions" (Katz, 1989, p.10). Once again, white working-class rage was re-focused on blacks and other "undesirables" rather than the ruling elite. The white working-class distanced themselves from the black working-class, ironically becoming the invisible poor along with other ethnic groups and colluding in their own disempowerment. To become vocal against the ruling elite risked the stigma of being seen as undeserving allies with blacks.

Some social scientists like Rubin (1976) believed that not only race, but class and ethnicity came to the foreground by the end of the sixties, confronting the myth that at

least among Anglos, upward mobility was the norm. She claimed that the white poor also emerged as being discontented, that "a roar of pain and rage was heard. Unexpectantly, the silent majority had found its voice" (p.3). I think this is true to the degree that the ruling elite, all the more, needed to use and focus the attention on working-class blacks. Yet, it is clear that working-class whites did not often unite with blacks or other working-class groups in opposition to the ruling elite. More often, white working-class rage was displaced on working-class blacks. Instead of uniting their rage and power, it was diluted to the disadvantage of both.

Racializing poverty

With the riots in the cities and the civil rights movement, after 1964 the focus of poverty was again in the cities rather than Appalachia and other rural areas as it had been in the early Kennedy administration. The symbol of this location became "the ghetto." The site and actors were reflected in a popular song by that name (number three single on the charts) sung by Elvis Presley in 1969.

> And if there's one thing that she don't need, it's another hungry mouth to feed in the ghetto. People don't you understand, the child needs a helping hand, he's goin' be an angry young man some day. Take a look at you and me, are we too blind to see, or do we simply turn our heads and look the other way …. As the crowd gathers round an angry young man face down in the streets with a gun in his hand in the ghetto. … and on a cold and gray Chicago morning, another little baby child is born, in the ghetto, and his mama cries. (Davis, 1969)

Although race was never mentioned, all the elements of the images that had dominated white America in the media were in this song. The hunger and an angry young man with a gun who "learns how to steal and he learns how to fight," who ends up getting killed. The mama with no mention of the father, who is crying, helpless and doesn't appear to know what to do. The suggestion that this was *another* mouth to feed, i.e., the woman

was promiscuous, and the *invitation* to first, not be blind but see what was going on, and second, to do something. This child needed a helping hand. The focus again was on the individual family within the ghetto needing the help of someone more powerful: a white hand, and presumably, white guilt money. Missing was the expose of racism, including the white-owned corporations pulling out of the cities, followed by more white flight to the suburbs as well as the middle class black flight to the South (Jones, 1989) that contributed to making the ghetto. The racism and classism that creates barriers of occupations, education, housing, medical care, transportation, political power and dreams was absent from the song. The police, schools, media, songs and other forces that are used to keep blacks and other working-class, struggling people from rising up and making their lives better were not highlighted. By making race the central focus of this "intense scrutiny" (Jones, 1992, p. 273), the economic and social class issues were obscured, decentralizing the struggles of all impoverished working-class peoples to the advantage of more privileged classes.

Poverty and the ghetto became code words for urban working-class blacks. An internal government report written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1965) made this more explicit. The Moniyhan report focused on the alleged breakdown of the black family in the ghetto. Male un- and under-employment were the key issues, forcing the women to work, demoralizing the men, and provoking the young to fail. The solution would be a massive federal effort to establish "a stable Negro family structure" (Katz, 1989, p25). Moynihan gave lip service to racism, apartheid, slavery, or classism, all factors that caused the lack of just wages and jobs and intentionally threatened family stability. He did not emphasize any positive, adaptive strategies to this oppression and exploitation. He

did not point out the support of extended families (Gonsalves, 2002) and kinship networks that are important sources of strength, courage and resistance in many black families. Moreover, his focus on pathology was emphasized at a juncture in the civil rights movement when black pride was also being emphasized. Thus, "the fusion of race, poverty, and cities became the tacitly accepted starting point among radicals, liberals, and conservatives for debates about policy and reform" (Katz, 1989, p.23). The focus of the debate shifted from institutional racism and the responsibility of the nation to the pathology of the black family and the responsibility of individual, *unworthy,* blacks.

Black leaders in the civil rights movements, black power and national independence movements challenged the beliefs that poverty was the result of moral decay. Their critique took "three main forms: political expose', empirical refutation and theoretical criticism" (Katz, 1989, p.17). George Jackson and Elderidge Cleaver said blacks in prison were political prisoners, resulting from racism. Others, like Jesse Jackson's "push for excellence" emphasized individual responsibility by blacks (Katz, 1989), perhaps focusing on black agency. Yet, many working-class blacks had struggled responsibly with poverty, working hard to care for their children and stay connected to their extended families and still were terribly impacted by racism.

Other critiques included: imposition of ethnocentric perspectives such as white middle class values and lifestyle, confusion of cause and effects of poverty, and lack of examination of the structures of inequality. There was an oversight of adaptive behaviors to oppressive conditions and simplification of the concept of culture and its interactions with race, class, ethnicity and other social constructs. Yet, these refutations did not

knock the images out of the media. After the riots in the cities abated, the image of the angry black male was replaced by the discourse about the black welfare queen.

The Welfare Rights Movement

One grass-roots working-class movement was significant for its coalition work during this time. Guida West (1990) wrote about the Welfare Rights Movement, a coalition of groups of women on welfare, both black and white, as well as other groups, including white and black middle-class women's groups, black civil rights groups, religious groups of different classes and races. West describes the coalition as multiracial and multi-class although it primarily was made up of working poor, black women, especially during the sixties. The vision of this group was integrationist from its outset, and used energy from the coalition-building wing of black civil rights, religious, semi-religious and feminist groups that also believed in cross-racial alliances.

West focused on the strength of the visible movement from 1965 to 1975 as money and supporters diminished with the Nixon era. These groups also faltered once energy was displaced from organizing protests to creating more stable organizations and focusing on political lobbying (Piven & Cloward, 1979). While in hostile environments, movements need to go underground and "ferment;" this does not mean the movement is dead nor that it is still not resisting. It may be that the elite prefers not to recognize the resistance, highlighting and fanning it. West talked about the strengths and conflict of coalition building. She cautioned that while the majority of the movement was for and by women, the few men involved tried to dominate the leadership and control the direction of the organization. They appeared to the outside as the leaders of the organization.

The movement's work involved multiple marches, class action suits, and visiting legislators. Some of the legal rights they garnered were the elimination of residency

requirements, midnight raids and the right to fair hearings before elimination of benefits. They worked to "ZAP FAP:" the Nixon-Moynihan 1968 "workfare" bill called the Family Assistance Program. One victory story takes place in California as women were being smeared as tax cheaters. They banded together and marched into an American Legion dinner to present then Governor Reagan with an award for being the highest paid welfare recipient. Reagan earned almost $76, 000 as governor and did not pay a single penny in taxes. Other women gave a Nobel prize in tax evasion to Nixon. For a time, the rhetoric about welfare recipients being tax cheaters faded away.

Not all of the "allied" groups equally supported welfare rights. Many traditional black women's middle class organizations gave minor support. In contrast, black feminist organizations strongly initiated and maintained ties with welfare rights groups. Financial support from these groups was minimal because of the lack of monies that these groups had access to but possibly also because of the visibility and control that men, black and white, had within the welfare rights organization. Traditional white middle-class groups also offered little support. Protestant white women's groups offered visibility and publicity such as for the FAP campaign.

The strongest consistent supports were women in the peace movement. Together with their mutual slogan, welfare not warfare, along with Friends of Welfare Rights, mostly white, mostly women, and mostly individuals and small groups, they worked to gain visibility on issues. The most positive aspect of coalition building provided some protection from repression. The League of Women Voters was more patriarchal in its approach and made policy decisions for women on welfare without consulting the women themselves. White dominated NOW was focused on the Equal Rights Amendment and

turned off by the sexist male leadership in the welfare rights groups. However, individual NOW members were supportive. The National Women's Political Caucus wanted welfare rights leaders to run for office. The latter group felt that short-term solutions were the more urgent goals, so class and race impacted their choice of priorities.

Chicana women felt a need to have a separate organization to pursue their own agendas. They, however, maintained their ties with the main organization so not to dilute membership. As working-class whites joined in the seventies, they wanted to push for educational benefits as a top priority. While black women felt education was important, more urgent was survival: cash and health benefits. Many black women also felt at a disadvantage to be able to compete fairly in educational systems.

Conflicts emerged with the allies of the welfare rights groups as the allies lacked an experiential understanding of the struggles of those on welfare. This often resulted in their "expertise" suggesting options that supported the status quo, and reflected the dominant view that welfare was demeaning. They urged women to get off welfare as quickly as possible, showed a lack of long-term commitment to the organization, and suggested quick solutions to exorcise guilt. Middle class friends felt resentful of being used as service/resource partners and wanted to be more politically involved.

Welfare Rights women were critical of the lack of empathy the feminists often had for those impacted by poverty. While supporting the ERA, it would not provide food for their families. They wanted mothering to be recognized as a full-time, valuable job, a goal that many feminists, especially non-parents, were against. They also differed with feminists over workfare, such as WIN: work improvement programs. They recognized that many feminists did not see this as slave labor, pushing poor women into low-paying,

dead-end service jobs while not adequately providing for their futures or their children's care. The biggest struggle within the groups was issues of racism and classism, especially with women who had slipped down into poverty from more stable working-class or middle class positions and seeing their positions as more temporary. In spite of these struggles, West (1990) strongly believes these coalitions were essential for providing support for the welfare rights movement. The welfare rights movement fought for critical rights for women on welfare and gained some significant victories.

We shall overcome

During the middle 1950's, Cold War politics dominated the American agenda. Big Labor drew back from civil rights issues as white, male dominated labor unions in general became more moderate as they were co-opted by business and the lure of stability. During this period, there was a sharp decline in heavy manufacturing. These combined issues caused black workers to be extremely vulnerable (Jones, 1992); for example, Detroit black autoworkers found themselves the targets of hate strikes. Many African Americans saw that labor activism was part of a larger mission, a civil rights mission and securing their place in the Democratic party (Jones, 1992).

In 1954, in Brown vs. Board of Education, the United States Supreme Court struck down the philosophy that separate but equal school facilities were legal, leading the way for a snail's pace desegregation of public education. This victory was won by NAACP lawyers like Thurgood Marshall with evidence from black social psychologists, Mamie Phipps Clark and Kenneth Bancroft Clark, who demonstrated the negative psychological effects of racism on black children who preferred a white to a black doll when presented with both (memory.loc.gov/ammen/aaohtml). In 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa May Parks, tired after a long day's work sewing for white folks, refused to give up her

seat and move to the back of the bus for a white patron. Her subsequent arrest sparked a city-wide non-violent bus boycott led by black leaders such as the young Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., eventually resulting in the desegregation of the city's buses.

In 1957, the Little Rock Nine, black teenagers, defied Arkansas governor's orders and with the help of Arkansas National Guard troops sent in by President Eisenhower, desegregated the local Central High School. In 1960, four young black college students in Greensboro, North Carolina sat down and refused to move from a whites-only lunch counter. This sparked further sit-ins involving fifty thousand, mostly black protesters in over one hundred cities, resulting in wide-spread violence against them and arrests but eventual desegregation of restaurants (Zinn, 1980). In 1961, the Freedom Riders, black and whites together, under the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) began riding buses throughout the South to protest segregated buses. They were met with violence and jail.

In 1963, in Birmingham, Alabama, blacks protesting in the streets endured tear gas, dogs, clubs and arrest. The same year, Martin Luther King, spoke his "I have a dream" speech during the March on Washington, D.C. Medgar Evans, a WWII vet and NAACP director, was killed in Mississippi after a rally. In 1964, three young civil rights volunteers, one black and two whites, were arrested, beaten, and killed in Mississippi during the Freedom Summer to promote black voter registration. With the nation focused on the search for their bodies, the bodies of other lynched blacks who had been missing for some time were discovered (www.watson.org/^nsa/blackhistory/civilrights-missippi.htm). Four little girls attending Sunday school were killed when a bomb exploded in their Birmingham church basement.

In Selma, Alabama, black schoolteachers protested the arrest of a well-respected citizen, Amelia Boynton, inspiring others to demonstrate. In a nearby town, Jimmie Jackson, a Vietnam vet, protecting his mother during the march, was shot and later died. As the black community in Marion turned out for the funeral march from Selma to Montgomery, blacks of all ages were viciously attacked as they crossed the Pettus Bridge on what was later called Bloody Sunday. King brought protestors into town for another march but wanted federal protection. After one aborted marching attempt, a white marcher was killed that night by local whites. This received national attention while Jackson's death had not. A federal judge then ruled the march was legal and President Johnson sent National Guard to protect the marchers that started at the Pettus Bridge. When the march reached Montgomery five days later, 25,000 people had participated (www.watson.org^has/blackhistory/civilrights-55.../selma.htm), including leaders like John Lewis and Coretta Scott King

Throughout U.S. cities during 1964 and 1965, black anger spilled out in rioting with Watts, in Los Angeles, California, left in flames. President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Black activists like Malcolm X, who was assassinated that year and Black Panthers leaders abandoned the non-violent stance of King and the NAACP as well as the members of the SNCC, the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee, charging that they were being used by the white establishment (Zinn, 1980).

The protests continued against white symbols throughout 1966. In 1967 eighty-three, mostly black people died in the gunfire as protestors clashed with government armed forces in urban communities. As busing to promote school desegregation increased that year in Florida, whites clashed with blacks, both parents and students. Congress

responded with another Civil Rights Act in 1968, which protected black rights but carried stiff penalties for anyone who encouraged threats of violence. This was enforced only against blacks. King, linking racism, poverty and the Vietnam War, was planning another march on Washington, a poor people's march, before he was assassinated in Tennessee while supporting a garbage workers' strike. More riots continued as a result, including in Gainesville, Florida, as the FBI began to crack down on black activists everywhere, killing, and jailing many leaders.

War on Poverty

For many the Johnson administration's declared "war on poverty" became a symbol of hope. As a result of citizen mobilization such as the black civil rights movement, the welfare rights movement as well as legal action brought before the courts, the stigma would be removed from those receiving public assistance and welfare recipients would receive their full rights as citizens. It also was a domestic focus that took the country's eyes off the war in Vietnam. Yet, in spite of some reforms and programs, public assistance still clung to its historical baggage. Pointing out the reliance on the Elizabethan Poor Laws, John Romanyshan wrote in 1971 in his book *Social Welfare: Charity to Justice:*

> Public assistance … unlike social insurance, rests on the police power of the government to promote public welfare through regulation and restraint. While the Poor Laws accepted limited public responsibility for the needs of the poor, its provisions were not an expression of the obligation of the state to its citizens. Indeed, to accept pauper supplies was to forego full claim to citizenship. Moreover, relief of the poor and their regulation as the "dangerous classes" are inter-woven themes in both the early Poor Law and its transformed version, our contemporary public assistance measures. (Adleman, 1985) aimed at the relief of destitution, the regulation of labor, the control of vagrancy, and the suppression of social disorder stemming from poverty … (p.244)

The war on poverty had similar purposes during this social unrest as blacks, poor whites, Native Americans, gay/lesbians and other people of color including those in prison, women, nationalists groups such as in Vietnam and later when threatened by the draft, the white middle class, protested their oppressions. Mass protests, including the Poor People's March on Washington in 1964 pressured Johnson to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as well as to declare war on poverty. The zenith of the civil rights era was 1965 as the political machinery began its counter-attack. According to Feagin (1975, p.52), the goals of American welfare were:(1) To relieve the suffering of the destitute poor at minimum cost; (2) to maintain the existing political and economic order (a) by expanding public relief somewhat in times of protest and (b) by utilizing public assistance to encourage or insure maximum work effort from key groups among the very poor; and (3) to reform the work attitudes and morals of the very poor.

Stephen Rose (1972) in *Betrayal of the Poor* pointed out that no poor people were involved in the design of the much touted community action programs (CAP) although some later served as tokens on some boards. Instead affluent citizens who lived in the same "target area" could represent the poor, thus fulfilling the law. Funds were cut from those community action agencies that were genuinely committed to representation by those most affected. Michael Katz's (1989) suggested that Operation Head Start, based on Riessman (1962) concern about *cultural deprivation* affected young people's educational opportunities, was the single most successful program of the War on Poverty. Indeed, Funiciello (1995) suggested:

The Great Society programs were the perfect vehicle for distributing patronage on a grand scale ...(Abbott & Sapsford, 1987) strategy was to achieve a marriage of otherwise feuding factions: mayors, poor people (who at first had cause for optimism), civil rights leaders, liberals and the press. Were it not for Vietnam, Johnson had every reason to believe that reelection was in the bag. His programs were shoring up a deteriorating political machine while providing the rhetorical posture for an end to poverty (p. 167).

The major responsibility for the failure of "welfare" has been the Johnson Administration because of the emphasis on giving the poor people services rather than income maintenance (Funiciello, 1995). Fearful that it would "breed dependency," monies directly allocated for welfare was not sufficient to help most families overcome their systemic oppression and escape its clutches.

Counter-Revolution

War on the Poor

After a period of response and a governmental desire to wage a "war on poverty" by Johnson's Great Society, Nixon renewed the welfare (and racial) backlash with his "war on welfare." With a stroke of Nixon's pen, the government again scapegoated the nations' problems on the backs of the working poor. To increase the effectiveness of the media campaign, the mythical image of the lazy, black welfare mother with scores of children, multiple and irresponsible boyfriends and generational dependency was revived and enlarged. The obsession became doing the poor a "favor" by forcing them to pay for their welfare benefits (Katz, 1989).

Welfare reform debates were stalled in the late 1980's over the allocation of monies for the management of services on behalf of "the poor" and who would provide these - government or non-profits entities. When the revenues did come, the benefit rates were

kept low and did not help lift any poor families above the poverty level. Many professionals, including therapists, benefited from salaries providing a variety of services. Thus, the income redistribution was to provide white collar jobs --both professional and support staff - rather than to provide a living wage for the poor. Similar patterns were also true with private charitable donations (Funiciello, 1995).

Wealthfare

While blacks and the poor were targeted for their dependency, the economic support that Uncle Sam gave ruling elite families and their corporations was obscured. The main direction of public policy was the moral decay of our societal values becasuse of laziness and theft of the poor, too many immigrants, taxes and meddling government. This distracted the voters from the strengthening of the ruling class. These attacks fanned voter apathy, resulting in the neglect of political power, the only significant power the working-class has to stem the greediness of the rich (Zweig, 2000).

Corporate welfare or wealthfare are economic aid packages delivered in a combination of three ways (AFSC, 2001). First, through tax revenues and loop holes; many affluent families and corporations paid a very small percentage of taxes. Second, through direct corporation aid: for example, with monies provided to the railroad, bus, or airlines industries to shore up transportation. Third, through government influence that favored the corporations, causing any of the branches of government to make favorable rulings, laws or decisions that would protect or create financial business for these corporations at the expense of the average citizen. While this has been happening throughout U.S. history, it is so much part of the social expectations that there is very little investigation or public outcry. A case in point is when the United States make trade agreements with other countries (e.g. NAFTA) that contain clauses that essentially proclaim the legal

sovereignty of the corporation over the laws of any particular country (Moyers, 2002, February 1).

Contract with America

The racist and worn out cultural image of the welfare queen which had enormous appeal, generating outrage and support for welfare "reform" was resurrected a decade later in the campaign "welfare to work. By 1995, welfare reform and the stereotype of irresponsible welfare mothers dominated the Republican Party's Contract with America (Mills, 1996). (Perhaps this should more honestly be re-named, The Contract with Affluent America). The *Contract* and The Personal Responsibility Act of 1995 (H.R.4) blames welfare mothers, not the U.S. structure of economic inequality for the increase of people below the poverty line. Using phrases such as "snaring millions of Americans into the welfare trap," "destructive social behavior" and expecting welfare recipients to "take personal responsibility for the decisions they make" the *Contract* makes clear the location of the necessary reform from the Republicans perspective (Mills, 1996, p. 391). While before it was the Back family that was responsible, now it was more specifically targeting the black mother. Previously shaping the image in racist and classist images, now sexist images also become part of the focus. It is the black mother's "dependence, addiction, and promiscuity" that "breed illegitimacy, crime, illiteracy and more poverty" (p.391).

In the "Contract with America" race, gender/sexuality, class and morality are interlaced. A white middle and upper class fascinated by drugs/alcohol, violence and sex focused on the symbols it wanted to represent poverty – black female faces in the ghetto. This despite the demographics during that time that showed that the typical welfare mother was white, single, with two or three children and is on welfare an average of three years. The highest numbers of children impacted by poverty are white, Southern children.

In previous legislation (ADC and earlier forms of AFDC), the goal was to support motherhood and control women's sexuality by reducing benefits by the dollar amounts of money earned by the working mother. The "moral" mother did not work. Restrictions in the 40's and 50's forbade women to have sex outside of marriage and prohibited a male living in the household, implicitly encouraging governmental dependence (Mills, 1996, p. 392). With the 1967 Work Incentive Program, the welfare-to-work theme of the Family Support Act of 1988, and the Contract, "self-sufficient" was now the criterion of a "good mother." Single poor women on welfare were assumed to be bad mothers unless proved otherwise. This contrasts strongly with widows, with or without children, who received government support (Funiciello, 1995), "good" (white?) women who deserved protection.

Towards a Vision of Change in the Twenty-first Century

By 1990 the locus of poverty was white, rural, small towns especially in Texas, South Dakota & Missouri. There were 21 million poor whites as compared to 9 million blacks. Blacks were a minority (39%) of welfare recipients. While the focus had been on the ghetto, the capitalists had been diverting attention from the Southerners below the poverty line (13 million), greater than the combined Northeastern & Midwestern States (12 million). Less than half (46%) lived in inner cities. The highest proportion were children, 26% of those under 6 yrs. There were more black female-headed households in rural areas (64%) compared to inner city (51%). Given the image of the Northern black "underclass," poverty policy represented less fact and more ideology.

While the sheer numbers of the poor are white, the poverty rate among blacks was 28% compared to 8.8% white. Nearly ½ of all black children lived in poor households compared to 13% whites. Nearly 75% lived in female-headed households as compared to 46% white. Of all families, almost half of black families headed by female compared to

14.3% white families. In total numbers, there are 1.5 million female black headed households compared to 1.8 white female headed households, although blacks represented only 11% of population (Jones, 1992).

> In 1990, to highlight the plight of Chinese sweatshop workers in New York City and unemployed miners in Cranks Creek, Kentucky was not to ignore the systematic racism that plagued the American political economy. Rather, a focus on the myriad causes of poverty, and the various groups impoverished, put race in its place as a factor- albeit a highly significant one, alone with age, sex, and ethnicity – that shaped a person's chances for gainful employment and, beyond that, for a decent job at a decent wage. (p. 290)

Being black still constitutes an outward "badge of otherness" (Jones, 1992, p.290). At the same time, as the poor population grows to be ever more foreign, native-born white, even (formerly) middle-class, female, and young, a politics based on race alone is problematic for all concerned.

Jones (1989) cautioned against administrations that realign the country with its colonial foundation "toward the unfettered pursuit of wealth"(p. 292). Without the check of labor unions and government regulation, more "underclasses' will be spewn along the way. The welfare debate always focuses on the issue of morality. The question should be *whose* morality. Where's the call of accountability of those in the government here to serve the people? What is the responsibility of those global corporations who have exploited the poor of all races and gender? Yet, there are those who approached the new century with hope, including feminist anthropologist Ruth Sidel (1986b) who spent her life portraying the struggles and strengths of working-class women of all colors.

> To suggest that aspects of American society must be significantly altered may seem to some to be utopian or at best visionary. In a time of corporate takeovers, insider trading, and lavish levels of private consumption, calling for fundamental restructuring of social and economic priorities may seem ... at best naive. I do not mean to suggest that such restructuring will be accomplished easily or in the near future, but while

> many of these changes may take years or even decades to accomplish, if we are to bring about significant change in the twenty-first century, discussion and debate must be ongoing and must involve all sectors of society. (p.466)

Family therapists who have often benefited from training in the clinics that serve the working–class poor of all races, need to be at least aware of, and preferably involved at some level, with that dialogue. Being aware of patterns of classism, racism, and sexism in American history will provide some context of the institutional structures of inequality that provide the context and problematize the therapeutic relationship. It is only in being aware of the past, articulating how that discourse seems to be alive in the present, that family therapists can hope to struggle against being part of the problem for our clients and our mutual future. As Michael Harrington suggested "When we join, in solidarity and not in *noblesse oblige,* with the poor, we will rediscover our own best selves. . . we will regain the vision of America" (cited in Katz, 1989, p. 239).

EXPLORING SOCIAL CLASS: A RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodology

In doing research, qualitative researchers Holloway and Wheeler (1996) differentiate between methodology "which include the principles and theoretical perspectives underlying the research" and method which "are the strategies or techniques for collecting and analyzing data" (p.130). In this research design chapter, I will discuss my methodology, the methods I chose and detail my research plan. My methodology which is qualitative and grounded in feminist and critical theory informed, narrative social constructionism which is congruent with my clinical philosophy (see Chapter One). Neither this methodology nor its informing influences have a particular method. Rather, methods are chosen because they are both congruent with the philosophy and they serve the purpose of the research. For my methods, I used the self of the researcher, a research team, focus groups, and grounded theory to facilitate date collection and analysis. For my research plan, I used five guiding questions to explore social class in family therapy education. These questions concern social class identity, interacting social constructs, encouraging social class, restraining social class and impact on therapy and therapy education. Research was conducted at four sites. I transcribed the audio-tapes and managed the data with Atlas-ti, a qualitative computer program.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research uses many of the same clinical skills of observation, curiosity and analysis that a competent therapist uses in practice (Rafuls, 1994; Rafuls & Moon, 1996)

and is especially suited for clinical research. Research, like therapy, is most useful when the process is open, participatory and combines the expertise of the participants and the researcher (Avis & Turner, 1996; Griffith & Griffith, 1990; Kaye, 1990; Lincoln, 1990; Rafuls & Moon, 1996; Rediger, 1996). Research is a co-creative process with participants about submerged knowledges, learning new ways of seeing and understanding. The art of weaving curiosity with guided, open-ended questions results in a multiverse of knowledges and meanings that is emergent and contextual. Qualitative research is "particularly appropriate to address meanings and perspectives of participants" (Creswell, 1998, p. 299; Hoshmand, 1989). As a therapist-researcher, qualitative methodology most closely resembles my professional skills, my view of the world and is most useful for the questions that I am asking (Sherman & Webb, 1995). I ground my qualitative research practice in narrative social constructionist theories, influenced by feminist family therapy critiques (Avis, 1986; Bograd, 1984; Goldner, 1985; Hare-Mustin, 1978) and feminist research theory (Avis & Turner, 1996; Holloway & Wheeler, 1996) as well as critical theory (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Giroux, 1995; Rediger, 1996). These theories explore power and privilege including social class.

Critical Theory

Critical theory (Giroux, 1995; Rediger, 1996) began in Germany in the 1920's when thinkers who became known as the Frankfurt school began to study philosophers including Karl Marx (1995) and G.W.F. Hegel (1931) and to focus on issues of power and privilege. As a religious educator interested in liberation theology and transformative education, I was influenced by Paulo Friere (1968) a Brazilian educator and critical theorist Ivan Illich (1976)

Critical theory strives to raise consciousness through self-reflection and dialogue with others, including a deconstruction of historical and contextual experiences and values (Gadimer, cited in Rediger, 1996). Critical theorists interrogate supporting structures, highlight the political in institutions, and make explicit the interrelationship of power, knowledge and domination (Giroux, 1988). Power often mystifies and distorts but also decides what is truth, i.e., reality (Giroux, 1988). For critical theorists, reality may exists apart from the observer, but can never be fully known (Rediger, 1996). Henry Giroux (1995) counseled the development of a "dangerous memory" (p. 196)–the reminder of past oppression and suffering but also stories of people's resistance. The critical theorist is not neutral; rather, reflections, values, stories and memories are made explicit in the service of action (Rediger, 1996). This leads to transformative possibilities and liberatory action (Giroux, 1995; Rediger, 1996), giving voice to subjugated persons and communities, realigning knowledge and power.

Critical theory is also a methodology of research. There are several important aspects of critical methodology (Rediger, 1996): (1) committing to know, (2) meeting together in dialogue, (3) understanding self and others through critical reflection, (4) identifying oppression, (5) increasing consciousness, (6) sharing knowledge, and (7) acting and inquiring beyond the research project. An essential question in critical theory research is, "Who is the research *for?* (Reason, 1988, cited in Rediger, 1996, p.131).

Critical theory does not have a specific research method or techniques. In deciding an appropriate method, self-reflection and dialogue are important components. Self-reflexivity raises awareness of self and the self's relations to society, including collusion with oppressive structures. (Rediger, 1996). Dialogue (Freire, 1970) about values and the

co-creation of knowledge (Giroux, 1995) through respectful listening and appropriate self-transparency (Rediger, 1996) characterize critical theory research.

Critics charge that critical theory has a hidden agenda: to focus on oppression, and a methodology but lacks a research method. Critical theorists reflect that a common weakness is to critique but to fail to make recommendations and take action (Giroux, 1995). This theory is not a practical choice for those who desire institutional funding.

Feminist Theory

There are many feminists who have both been influenced by and have influenced critical theory, although the latter is more rarely acknowledged. I am a feminist because my first *awareness* of oppression at the age of four was sex/gender oppression. I became aware of how outsiders reacted to my parents' more accepting gender attitudes toward me and as a result how especially my mother began to socialize me to more appropriate, parallel "outside the family" behavior in preparation for kindergarten and church attendance. These initial experiences first developed within me a sense of outrage, injustice and the irrationality of oppressive structures, as well as eventually, a compassion for others who were constrained by some aspect of their "identity' and devalued.

Feminist theory is concerned with highlighting gender oppression, placing women's experiences in the center of research, flattening the dynamics of hierarchy while acknowledging the power of the researcher's, raising gender consciousness and doing research that improves women's lives (Halloway & Wheeler, 1996).

As in critical theory, feminist theorists point out the connections between power and knowledge. Those who have the power to control the production or process of knowledge-making, decide which knowledge is legitimate. Knowledge sanctioned by those in power is true, right, good, legitimate, rational, objective, scientific, credible,

traditional/mainstream, scholarly, and/or beneficial. Those "knowledges" which are not authenticated by those in power are variously labeled: false, wrong, bad, illegitimate, irrational, biased, old wives' tales, heretical, alternative, ignorant and/or dangerous. The former experiences are grouped under the discourse of the one Knowledge that through Science, discovers Reality. These latter subaltern or subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 1980) such as women's experiences, are rendered "invisible and without credibility in a predominately male construction of reality which reflects and legitimates dominant ideologies, power structures and social interests" (Avis & Turner, 1996), p. 147.

Feminist Research

Feminists have critiqued the "objective' science approach that has marginalized women's experiences, disempowered women as objects of, rather than active participants or agents in, research. Such an approach has made male's experiences normative and often had men researching women's issues with an attitude of expertise rather than a respect for women's lived experience. Judith Myers Avis and Jean Turner (1996) challenged that feminist research, while restoring women's issues to the center of research, is not sufficient. Sex and gender oppressions are only two forms of subjugated experience. Oppression has many interrelated forms that twist and turn in history to serve those in power. Other subaltern groups must be invited in from the margins to the center by feminist research.

> The study of gender includes but is not limited to what are often considered the distinctively feminist issues: the situation of women and the analysis of male domination (or patriarchy). . . . Feminist theorists recover and explore the aspects of societies that have been suppressed, unarticulated, or denied within male-dominant viewpoints. (Jane Flax, 1990, cited in Avis & Turner, 1996, p. 147)

Feminist researchers must be self-reflexive especially when we study subalterns communities in which we are not participants to avoid the same disrespect, invalidation and objectification as women have experienced. In spite of the visibility of more subjugated knowledges, most of us have long been schooled in "the scientific" method.

While some feminist researchers would say there is a distinctive feminist methodology, feminist theorist Sandra Harding (1987) argued that a specific feminist methodology does not exist although there are many overlapping principles that the various feminist researchers might use in their research approach (Halloway & Wheeler, 1996). White, middle-class, heterosexual feminist theorists have often neglected those of other races, classes, and sexual orientations. Luce Irigary (1985) pointed out the dangers of reductionism in "This Sex which is not One." Many argue against essentializing or further subjugating the diversity of women's experiences into one feminist standpoint (Stephanie Riger, 1992, cited in Avis & Turner, 1996).

Skills important to the feminist researcher include (Avis & Turner, 1996; Halloway & Wheeler, 1996): (1) feminist consciousness including analysis of gender and power in context and history; (2) self-reflexive skills of self-knowledge, experience and values; & (3) competence in pertinent research methodologies. Critically informed feminist researchers would add: (4) attention to other issues of power and oppression in institutional structures; (5) emphasis on inclusivity and social justice; and (6) action orientation (Avis & Turner, 1996). For a clinical researcher, the research credibility would include its applicability to therapy in general as well as for highlighting women's and other neglected voices (Avis & Turner, 1996). It would also include feedback with participants to ensure accuracy of their meanings as well as representing a diversity of

views, not just a consensus of opinions (Avis & Turner, 1996). Creating space for the participants' own voices also allows the reader direct assess to some of the information, rather than only having access through the researchers' voice.

Critiques of feminist research include the focus on gender and issues of exclusivity. This is a valid caution as those who have been more marginalized must resist the tendency to oppress or marginalize in turn. Yet, while women's experiences are centered, it does not mean that men's experiences are necessarily marginalized, only sized to share the center. Those in power when forced to share any of their power often feel de-centered when it is often the perceptions of others that they still occupy significant and primary central space and power. It can also be argued that focusing more on women is only a small attempt to counter-balance centuries of masculinist focus. More marginalized men such as working-class, black, gay, differently abled, and older men have also benefited from feminist analysis that focuses on other issues of oppression.

Feminist research has been critiqued for not involving the participant more in choice of topics and involvement with data analysis. This is a valid issue that needs serious attention. Issues of power and economics must also be taken into consideration such as who had authority over the research and researcher? Who is paying for the research? What institutional constraints might there be on the researcher that might make it difficult to make participatory researcher possible? Nonetheless, every researcher that pushes and resists these boundaries of power makes it more possible for more collaborative research to follow.

In summary, feminist research must be guided by feminist theory which strives to mindfully focus on the connection between power and gender and other social constructs,

use a multiplicity of, often trans- disciplinary, methods, and represent human diversity. It must elucidate the social context, reflect on the roles, values, assumptions and power dynamics of the researcher and the scholarship community, and respect the research relationship with participants. Finally, feminist research must be accountable to research participants, especially in representing their voices and work towards social transformation, particularly mindful of women and other subjugated groups (Avis & Turner, 1996; also cites Reinhartz, 1992).

Social Constructionism

Narrative, social constructionist theories (Early et al., 1994, May; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Hare-Mustin, 1994; Madigan, 1992; White & Epston, 1990) perceive "truth" as socially constructed, constituted through language and maintained through narrative, pointing to preferred realities rather than essential truths (Freedman & Combs, 1996). This perspective situates therapy in the politics of power and privilege (Amundson, Stewart, & Valentine, 1993; Goldner, 1993; Goodrich, 1991; Hare-Mustin, 1991; White, 1990). Social constructionist narratives deconstruct dominant stories, externalizing the problem, seeking alternative and preferred stories, and co-creating new stories (White & Epston, 1990). For a more detailed explanation of narrative, social constructionist clinical theory, consult Chapter 1.

Social constructionist research has roots in the qualitative paradigm that constructivist researchers Egon Guba (1990) and Yvonne Lincoln (1990) have pioneered. Lincoln and Guba (1985) rejected positivist inquiry on three grounds: "its posture on reality, its stance on the knower-known relationship, and its stance on the possibility of generalization" (Lincoln, 1990, p.68). They developed a research methodology that explores socially constructed, multiple realities, relies more on qualitative rather than quantitative methods,

produces research that is relevant, rather than rigorous, and grounds theory in the data rather than developing the theory *a priori* the research. They designed research that expands rather than reduces the inquiry, focuses on the researcher as the primary, although not exclusive, research "instrument," conduct research in naturalistic settings rather than laboratories, produce patterns rather than variables and promote participation rather than control of the research. They wanted research to be useful, action focused and explore meaning in human life.

Guba and Lincoln (1990) were concerned about the articulation of values in the research process. Instead of objectivity, they embraced involvement, emotions and social commitment. They focused on language that is connecting and explore power, values, conflict, and construction. They looked at research that demonstrated "energy and passion" (p.86). As Lincoln explained, they abandoned:

> the role of dispassionate observer in favor of the role of passionate participant. The tone of our inquiries will change radically. Nor should we be, as I have been, ashamed to be called "passionate" or "polemic" or "argumentative". (p. 86)

Lincoln (1990) suggested that human values based on concepts of community, caring, compassion, and cooperation, need to be brought back into the research process.

Both social constructionism and constructivists have their critics, even from within the field. Citing their multi-verse of reality, one critic charges that social constructionists/constructivists should embrace science as one view of the universe. Challenging that it could facilitate greater tolerance, building bridges of compassion and respect, instead these methodologies are perceived as building walls between more positivist science and themselves (Wick, 1996). Many critics have long cited the obtuse language used by post modern writers. Another research criticism directed is that social

constructionists/constructivists focus more on the process of therapy rather than the outcome that has captivated the attention of more positivist therapy researchers. The methodes used by these researchers explore new aspects of therapy rather than focusing on the pre-existing categories and issues studied by more traditional researchers who have responded to the desire for outcome research by insurance companies (Neimeyer, 1997). In spite of these criticisms, social constructionist and constructivist research expand the available research paradigms, especially for research that is conducted in naturalistic settings, is more collaborative, action-oriented and humane.

Method

The Researcher

In qualitative literature, the researcher is part of the research process and regarded as a research instrument. In Chapter One, I outlined my professional journey to explore social class through my work and research. I mentioned my own personal struggle with the issues as I entered into the dissertation process. Through this process I began to understand my own family's very complex class identity, the pain that caused and the resulting discourse of silence. This was reinforced by the dominant culture's imposition that we were middle class although from an early age I was aware of many differences between myself and middle class classmates. This growing awareness of my social class was further complicated by other differences I experienced because of gender, ethnicity, religion/spirituality. I have since claimed for myself a working class identity, realizing that for most of my childhood and all my adult life, this has been my life experience.

I identity myself as an educator, a therapist, and as a supervisor as well as a researcher. Each of these roles have their own unique goals and purposes. From a feminist position of multiplicity, I do not see rigid boundaries between these roles. While I may be

highlighting the role of a researcher during this process, my other roles, identities and aspects of self do influence the research process.

Research Team

Reflecting teams have been an important part of postmodern, social constructionist clinical practice since Tom Andersen first introduced this idea (Andersen, 1987; 1991). There has been a great deal of experimentation with reflecting teams (Andersen, 1987; Lax, 1995; Smith, Jenkins, & Sell, 1995; Steier, 1999). The hope is to generate as many alternative ideas and diverse viewpoints as possible to offer a variety of perspectives. The process is an opportunity to voice, make visible and externalize many of the potential thoughts and feelings that may be in the "back of the minds" of both the client and the therapist. Reflecting teams are often used to open up new "space" or areas of discussion in a therapeutic relationship,

I have used an adaptation of the reflecting team model to provide alternative voices to my own synthesis and analysis during this research process. A research team of three to six members have continued to serve as a support and/or as a reflecting team for myself as a researcher. Three members of the research team are professional clinicians and researchers. Three other research support members are in other social science disciplines. I met once with the research team before meeting with the first focus groups and have continued to be in contact in person, phone and via narrative e-mails throughout the data collection and analysis process to share thoughts about the emerging research. I also shared with various members of the team throughout the research process copies of anonymous transcripts and memos to broaden my own perspective as a researcher. This has helped to create more space to generate a diversity of ideas as well as to provide some clarity in moments of being overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of data.

Another example of the clarity that the research team provided was by challenging me to consider my own internalized classism as a possible source of my own fears before I began the data collection process. I had not considered using a social class analysis to explore my own feelings of inadequacy and terror to begin the focus groups in spite of decades of experience of facilitating groups, including focus groups, a love of doing research and adequate preparation.

Focus Groups

Another method I used in the research was focus groups. Focus groups are interviews with similar groups of people guided by a facilitator and focused on a particular topic (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996; Krueger, 1998; Piercy & Nickerson, 1996; Slocum, Wichhart, Rocheleau, & Thomas-Slayter, 1995). These groups are designed to produce data via a group process in which participants learn from and expand on each other's ideas through interactive discussion. Focus groups are useful when conducting exploratory research in new areas to generate theory. They are particularly suited to the skills of family therapists and supervisors. Groups often have a shared role or "break characteristic" (Knodel, 1993, cited in Piercy & Nickerson, 1996, p.177) that causes them to differ from another focus group. This allows privileging of different voices from different perspectives and positions of power (Giroux, 1995). I used two types of focus group at each site consisting of the researcher and either all a) student- therapists or b) faculty/supervisors.

Grounded Theory

The last method I used in this research design was grounded theory. Grounded theory (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Field & Morse, 1985; Holloway & Wheeler, 1996; Hutchinson, 1995; Morse, 1991a; Rafuls & Moon, 1996; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999) is

a systematic, qualitative methododology that develops theory from the data. I used grounded theory as a compatible data collection and analysis method.

Grounded theory's key feature is the constant comparative method, an inductive process involving a constant interplay between data collection and data analysis. As information is collected, it is analyzed for emergent theoretical categories. Grounded theory is based on the following assumptions: 1) it is paradigm transcending in search of new understandings of social processes; and 2) reality is socially and symbolically constructed, always emerging and relative to social life. This philosophy is reflected in each step, especially in data collection and analysis.

Through the process of discovery, grounded theory explores 1) the world through eyes of participants and 2) the emerging themes of interpersonal processes. The data serves four basic functions for theory: 1) clarifies existing theory; 2) refocuses, 3) reformulates and 4). initiates new theory. Data gathering consists of four processes: 1) observation - allowing awareness of social structures and patterns; 2) reflection - recording preconceptions, values, beliefs; 3) interviewing - viewing the situation through eyes of participants; and 4) reviewing - analyzing written documents and materials. As a social constructionist researcher, I chose to be a participant observer.

In grounded theory, research is conducted in the field over a period of time. Contradictory data is searched out and unusual themes are investigated. Data are coded on increasingly more complex levels, looking for emerging themes and theoretical constructs. Data gathering and analysis continues throughout the research process.

Research Plan

The research plan included developing research questions, data gathering decisions, data analysis, on-going design adjustment, and evaluation. The research questions

included both general guiding questions and more specific data gathering questions about social class in therapy and therapy education. The data gathering process included choosing and securing research sites, deciding what kind of participants to include in the research and how to connect with them, ethical considerations including protecting participant confidentiality and striving for a more collaborative process. The data analysis included the logistics of transcription, learning and using a qualitative computer program to manage the data and continuous self-reflection via memos. Adjustments to the research design and evaluation of the research process were on going.

By the end of the data gathering process, semi-structured, in-depth focus groups had been conducted at four family therapy education sites. There were two types of focus groups at each site, one composed entirely of faculty and the second group entirely of students. At least three and no more than eight participants were involved in each group. The initial, exploratory focus groups were conducted at the first site in the summer of 1999. The remaining data were collected at three more sites in the winter/spring of 2001.

Research Questions

Questions in qualitative research help focus the interview process as well as contribute to data collection and ongoing data analysis. Open-ended discussion questions exploring the theme of social class in the context of therapy and therapy education were used to deconstruct the dominant stories and open space for conversation in the groups.

Guiding questions

Four guiding research questions were used initially to focus the research design. After the first focus groups I realized I needed to more explicitly address the interaction of social class with other organizing contexts such as race and gender so I added question number two, for a total of five guiding questions. These are: 1)What is social class and

how do participants identify their own class status? 2) How does race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion/spirituality and other identities interact with and inform your perspective about social class? 3) How are clients, therapists, or faculty/supervisors encouraged to highlight, voice, and make visible social class issues in therapy and in the training? 4) What restrains clients, therapists, or faculty/supervisors from discussing social class? 5) How does the presence or absence of these conversations about social class influence the process of therapy and therapy education? These were the guiding questions that structured the focus groups (see Table 1).

Data gathering questions

Guiding questions provide the structure for the focus group while data gathering questions evoke the emerging data. Data gathering questions are often more general at the beginning of the interview and are increasingly more focused and specific as the interview progresses (Rafuls & Moon, 1996). Questions are emergent from the discussions and might be added, adapted or dropped as the research progresses and the data informs the research process (Piercy & Nickerson, 1996). Some of the data gathering questions included (see Table 1): When you hear "social class," what do you think of? What class images, thoughts, values, or beliefs come to mind? How does our language reflect assumptions about social class? How do class images and assumptions influence our sense of and experience of our clients/supervisees and vice-versa? Ultimately, how might it impact the effectiveness of therapy?

Data Gathering

In the summer of 1999, I did research at a first program site to try out my initial research design and make modifications. By the following spring of 2000, I had identified and mailed letters of request to do research at several sites that fit the criteria of

being post modern, social constructionist family therapy education centers with clinics.

By late summer, either I had been declined or had not heard back from the sites I had

contacted. I decided to take advantage of an offer from a doctoral committee member to

facilitate contacts with programs accredited by the Commission of Accreditation of the

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (Co-AAMFT). By early fall

2000, I e-mailed potential site hosts at several sites that fit the criteria (see Appendix A).

Table 1: Examples of Data Gathering Questions Emerging from Guiding Questions			
I.	How do you identify your own social class or do you? How does that impact who you are and what you do?	What's your sense of your supervisors or professors' class identity? How have you gathered this impression?	How has your social class identity changed if any, since you have been pursuing this profession and an advanced degree?
II.	How do you think race or gender interact with social class, either in your own life or in the program?	What other contextual issues/variables interact with social class from your experience?	How do you think that racial, national, regional or other issues differ from the usual US understanding of social class?
III.	How often do you have conversations about social class in therapy or supervision?	How do these conversations come up in therapy and/or supervision?	How sensitive do you feel the faculty is to issues of social class within the program?
IV.	Who initiates conversations about social class in therapy or supervision? Who do you think should initiate these issues?	How comfortable are you in bringing up or discussing social class with your client or your supervisor? What emotions are you aware of when exploring these issues?	When these issues have come up in supervision, what has facilitated or constrained a discussion about these issues? How could a program actively support creation of meaning around social class?
V.	How do you think that social class impacts the issues that are clients bring to therapy or you bring to supervision?	How does it impact therapy or supervision when there is a perception on at least one of your parts that you are of a different social class?	What social class issues do we might we need to be aware of when we sit with a client in therapy? Or a student-therapist in supervision?

Sites

These selected training programs all operate from a postmodern, social constructionist perspective that values meaning and the co-construction of reality as a shared process between client and therapist, and therapist and supervisor. Each site also demonstrated an interest in the theme of social class as evidenced by documents or writings produced by faculty and/or program brochures.

By spring 2001, I had three additional sites scheduled to participate in the research project. After the "site hosts" initial indication of interest, I emailed a "research prospectus" (see Appendix B) with more information for the site host to present at a faculty meeting. When I had faculty approval and a date, I emailed a letter of general invitation for students to the site host along with an attachment that contained more information for those who were interested, including local contact information as well as my contact information (see Appendix C). The week before the research visit, I emailed a list of guiding questions to the site host to be distributed to people who had indicated an interest in participating in the research (see Appendix D).

I chose not to include a more detailed description of each site to protect the confidentiality of the participants as many U.S. family therapist educators are familiar with the accredited programs in the United States. These programs chosen include both graduate degree granting and post-graduate from a variety of locations and settings.

Participants

A purposeful (Field & Morse, 1985; Morse, 1991b) or theoretical (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) sample of people fitting each focus group criteria was used for this study. The two types of focus groups consisted of 1) student-therapists and 2) faculty/supervisors. Faculty/supervisors were providing supervision/training at a family therapy training

program and the student-therapists participated in these same programs. Volunteers were invited to participate in the appropriate focus group via an e-mailed letter of information sent to the research contact person at each site. In order to give sufficient time for each participant to be actively involved, there were no more than eight participants (Piercy & Nickerson, 1996) in each group. At one site, there were two student groups. In total, there were four faculty and five student groups at the four sites,

At several sites, professors met with their classes and offered the students the opportunity to participate in the research project. In two situations, classes were delayed for up to an hour so those students could participate if they chose. (Inclement weather had delayed the originally agreed upon meeting time for students). In another situation, I met with students whose professor gave them the opportunity to participate in a different location while their class continued. In two more situations, I met with students at times totally independent from class times.

Before the focus group actually started, I went over the informed consent and answered any questions that participants had. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without affecting involvement in the training programs. The participants were then asked to sign an informed consent. These were collected before the taping began (see Appendix E).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an ethical concept protecting the participants' privacy and disclosures to the researcher (Smith-Bell & Winslade, 1994). The confidentiality of specific research data were disguised by coding to respect participant privacy. All audio and videotapes were stored in a locked file cabinet in a private, locked office during the study except when actively being used for transcription. The tapes were erased at the

conclusion of the study. One member of the research team assisted in the draft transcription of one focus group when I began to have symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome. I transcribed the other eight in their entirety and edited the ninth. All the data were handled in a respectful, confidential manner (American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, 2000; American Educational Research Association, 1994)

Collaboration

I am a reflecting participant in the research system. Feminists have challenged researchers to be aware of the "potential for exploitation of women and other marginalized groups" (Morrow, 1995, p. 318). The participants are not only passive subjects; they are co-researchers, as they, too, have a stake in the research (American Educational Research Association, 1994). The guiding questions for the focus groups were submitted via the site host to group participants to stimulate co-creation of the conversation. Memos and a research team encouraged reflection throughout the research.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory method was used to code, develop categories and analyze the data. Coding began using words from the data and became increasingly more complex as similar codes were connected as code families via common themes: Level I: a) substantive coding (often called "in-vivo" coding) - exact words, catchy and meaningful phrases; b) open coding – thematic coding of sentences or paragraphs; Level II: code-families –merging and grouping of level I codes into similar categories; and Level III: developing meta-codes or themes that reflect theoretical constructs.

During the data analysis, I looked for relationships between concepts that generated these theoretical constructs. Research memos, document analysis from the research sites, feedback from workshop participants, continuing literature searches and reflections from

a research support team contributed to data triangulation. Contradictory data and exceptions were investigated. The emerging themes created the "story" of what was going on in the research study. The theory emerged from this story.

Transcription

Each interview was audio taped and four interviews videotaped to facilitate the transcription. The transcription was verbatim and the transcripts were compared with both the audio and video tapes to insure accuracy. The tapes cover nine focus groups, about eleven interview hours creating two-hundred twenty-one pages of single spaced transcription material or 946 KB (kilobytes) of information. The shortest focus group was forty-five minutes (a faculty group) and the longest was two hours (a student group). I requested an hour to two hours of interview time per focus group. Because of program priorities and time constraints, I generally was given an hour per group.

I transcribed the tapes myself with the exception of one tape as discussed earlier both because of lack of funds but more importantly, to develop a feel for the raw data throughout the research process and continue on-going analysis. With the help of a research assistant, I learned Atlas/ti, a qualitative computer program, to manage the data (Durkin, 1997; Fielding & Lee, 1998; Holloway & Wheeler, 1996; Pfaffenberger, 1988; Weitzman & Miles, 1995).

Computer-assisted data management

The qualitative data computer program, Atlas.ti, was particularly helpful during this part of the process as it helped me to manage large, complex groups of information. The program helped me organize the transcripts, codes generated with linked quotations, memos that were generated during the analysis as well as memos that I have written since the beginning of the research, and notes from my literature searches. In the three

previous qualitative research projects, the most frustrating aspect was the space needed to keep data organized and accessible without spending time looking for a lost file folder or pieces of data. Atlas/ti also made it easier to organize and reorganize clusters of themes that continued to emerge from the collected data. I was able to organize various "code families" and visual displays of the codes to explore various "stories" of the interrelationships among the codes or code families.

Atlas.ti allowed me to reflect on the participants' possible meanings both within their original context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), each transcribed interview as a whole and organized collectively via themes with other participants' voices. Because of the computer's ability to organize and connect quotes in both modalities, I did not have to choose between these dual processes. I could compare similar quotes across all the transcripts, choose only student quotes, and/or see the quote within its original context.

Two disadvantages of using this program were the time-lag and frustration initially learning the program and the facility in generating codes, especially "in-vivo" or actual text codes by using "drag and drop" methods. The learning curve was especially difficult because I did not personally know anyone who was familiar with the program. Persistent tutoring via the tutorial program especially with the support of one research assistant, perusing the handbook and "lurking" on the Atlas.ti listserve finally resulted in sufficient knowledge to plunge into the process.

I did not use Atlas.ti to automatically generate codes for me. (I did not want to use a computer to do this; I wanted to "own" this part of the process. Besides, I never did understand how the program worked to do this!) However, the facility to code via computer using drag and drop features or drop-down fields encouraged my perfectionism

to over-do Level I "in vivo" codes of actual text- words or phrases that might be useful. This resulted in my initially over-generating codes for the nine documents, which were merged into about 250 codes. I then organized these into twenty-four code families. From these families, fifteen theoretical codes emerged to tell this story. I still have much to learn about using Atlas.ti to its fullest capacity as a research instrument. Despite the initial frustration, it was useful to manage the complexity of research data. Perhaps my favorite part of the program was the facility to create and organize memos connected to the information or even "free" memos that occurred as I was looking over the data.

Memoing

Field notes or memos are an important part of data analysis for the qualitative researcher (Glesne & Peskin, 1992; Silverman, 2000). Memos allow the researcher to remember ideas, descriptions, subjective, impact on the researcher, I think of it as initially a creative process that can later be expanded, organized and further analyzed. During this research process, I used several tools that facilitated spontaneous critical and reflexive thinking: a small notebook, post it notes, a small micro-cassette recorder, and a computer with a word processor and later, with a qualitative program. As therapist, I have learned to discipline myself to take brief notes immediately after sessions. As an employee at one therapy site, I learned to dictate these reflections on a micro-cassette. When neither tool was available, I used a small notebook to jot a few lines or post-it notes to jot a few phrases to jog my memory.

All of these skills came in handy during this research process. This along with a laptop computer loaned by a friend allowed me to remember and record thoughts, feelings, observations and ideas that occurred after the research events at each site. I would record some first impressions and sketches in my notebook immediately after the

research. I would later find a private place to free associate into the micro-cassette, recording my feelings and first impressions. Later that evening I would listen to the focus groups tapes and write and/or record more memos. I would transcribe and expand on these notes on the laptop These memos were added to journal entries that I had recorded in a word processing program when I began conceptualizing the research process. The journal entries recorded my plans, steps I needed to take, and details I needed to remember. About the time I began transcribing my first tapes, I began to use both the task lists and the journal entries of Microsoft Outlook each day as I planned what I wanted to accomplish. The journal entries were later copied to the memo section in Atlas.ti. During the more intensive writing process, I later supplemented my journal entries with more oral comments via a microcassette as I needed a break from writing.

For example, to keep track of which participant made each comment, within an hour after the session, I made field notes. I drew a diagram of each focus room and wrote down the names of each participant, using the email lists I had passed around, the signed confidentiality sheets, and the information I had downloaded from the web about the professors in each program. I visualized each person and wrote down some of the comments that they made. I also wrote down some of the key points I remember from each session and my reflections. Three focus groups were videotaped as well because the equipment was available. I listened at least four times, often up to six times, very carefully to each audio-tape as I listened to the tapes initially for a general impression, transcribed the tapes, checked the transcript against the audio-tape for accuracy, and after the coding process, listened to the tapes again to see if I had missed any themes. I became very familiar with each person's comments, making it more difficult to edit each

quote for brevity as I wove them into this dissertation. I remembered as each person spoke, their faces, their emphasis, their silences and their laughter. I worked hard to honor what I thought they were saying as I edited the tapes. I also used at least one research team member to aid me in this process.

As I noted earlier, the Atlas.ti program helped me to organize and connect these memos and notes. I was able to organize each memo as personal, planning, ideas, and emerging theories. I could code, connect the memo to a code or connect the memo to a transcript. I could easily change the codes, connections and organization as my ideas developed. Both variety of means to record my observations and the ability to organize them helped me to be more faithful to this reflection process.

Conclusion

Qualitative research is a dynamic process. The review of the literature is ongoing rather than reserved only for the beginning of the study. After research was conducted and initially analyzed after each site visit, new ideas, research questions and possible ways to collect research emerged. In this section I discuss modification to my research design, the limitations of that design, and the criteria I used for reflexive evaluation.

Design Adjustments

I had struggled from the beginning of the conception of this project with how to highlight social class without ignoring or de-valuing important social constructs such as race, gender, sexual orientation. I am aware that although we tend to "talk about" gender, race and social class in family therapy, this is more often "lip service" (as several participants directly addressed the issue) than actual engagement and integration in our therapy and therapy education. I struggled with only focusing on the "mantra" of race, class, and gender, as another participant called it, when we so often neglect other social

constructs such as age, health/ability, appearance, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. I have

an expansive gaze and I often need to "discipline" and focus my study. I finally decided

that I would "highlight" social class by using it exclusively in the guiding questions and

address the other social constructs with data gathering questions. By the end of the first

focus group, I clarified my ambivalence. The second group only confirmed my decision

that social class cannot be separated from other social constructs. This confirmed

thoughts planted by Cherrie Moraga (1983), further clarified by other literature and by

my course on working-class women. As a result, I added a guiding question exploring

the interaction of social class with other social constructs of identity.

I continually added data gathering questions from interests that were expressed at each

site, such as the professional socialization process and its link to social class. I also

explored topics with some focus groups that didn't hold the same interest with other

focus groups or perhaps that were "squeezed out" by other interests, for example focusing

on issues of health and ability and its interaction with social class.

I confirmed my desire to have at least an hour and a half for each focus group and time

to process at the end. I needed to modify this expectation given that most programs were

willing to give me an hour of faculty time, sometimes a little longer to meet with the

students. This was initially frustrating as there was a certain flow to the process that

needed an initial phase to encourage the participants to talk freely about social class by

focusing on their own histories before moving into issues connected with the program or

therapy. I quickly learned from the participants that this initial phase was one of the most

important parts of the research and could not be rushed, similar to setting up a therapeutic

or supervisory relationship. I continued to modify the research design throughout the

research process with each site with the result that often less time was spent on questions about therapy which were part of guiding question number five. While this was one of my initial twin focuses, it became clear that there was sufficient to focus on within the programs and profession that still impacted the therapy.

Project limitations

Limitations of this research project included the financial and time restrictions imposed by any project, but also for research that is not funded. I had initially wanted to conduct a focus group for clients at each site as "stakeholder" feedback. Given the difficulty and the time involved getting permission to do research at the sites, I decided (with guidance from several of my dissertation committee) that a more realistic modification would be to do just two focus groups at each site. This was a positive modification as I realized there was significant learning within the programs, although it was difficult for me to let go of this potential collaboration with clients.

I would have preferred to have more collaboration and feedback from participants in the design, data collection, and analysis of this project in order to make the research more collaborative. I acknowledge that I felt economically restrained and perhaps imaginatively constrained from doing so. The dissertation research process does not easily support collaborative work. It also would have been informative to do additional research at family therapy education programs that do not operate from a social constructionist perspective. Or programs that do not indicate any awareness about social class in their program brochures. Time constraints as well as budget limitations resulted in a narrower, though perhaps more realistic, focus. The final research design with modifications, was within the practical parameters of the focus and purpose of this study.

Qualitative research is very useful for exploratory study and is not universally applicable to other contexts. A "thick" description of the sites and participants often can help future researchers to understand how each of the contexts studied in this project may be similar or different from future research foci. Because of the small parameter of accredited family therapy programs, I chose not to include a "thick" description of the research sites or participants to protect the confidentiality of the participants and programs involved. This makes it more difficult to extrapolate the findings for future research.

Evaluation

Criteria for qualitative research credibility (Creswell, 1998) is different than that of quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss the trustworthiness of qualitative work. These include the researcher's awareness of one's own assumptions, the awareness of many stakeholder's assumptions, the invitation to action by the research, the ability to "engage the political arena" (p.72), the increase of understanding, the "presentation of multiple, holisitic, competing, and often conflictual realities" (p.73) representing the diverse participants and stakeholders, and "the passion, commitment, and involvement of the inquirer" with the co-participants (p.73).

Maria Piantanida (1999) mentioned several criteria that I have modified as open, rather than closed, questions. How is the research useful? What indicates there was careful, systematic reflection? How does the layout make sense? How could it be improved? How reflective is it of people's experiences? How insightful was it? How does it reflect passion and vibrancy? How is it powerful, challenging and touching? How do the researcher and research demonstrate integrity and respect for participants?

As a feminist-informed, critical social constructionist, I would also ask, How does it deconstruct power and knowledge? How does this research add to understanding about social class? What practical application does this research have in training programs and ultimately, in therapy? How does it improve the lives of women and other marginalized peoples? In what ways could this research been improved?

These are questions that I have tried to reflect on and respond to throughout the research process as I expanded my own awareness after conversations at each site. As a result, I made changes in my guiding and especially my data gathering, questions. I expanded my historical perspectives chapter as I felt the historical stories that I was sharing continued to privilege certain groups and regions. My challenge was how to expand perspectives without making the information overwhelming. It is the stakeholders, both active participants and others: therapists, faculty/supervisors, dissertation committee, university community and ultimately, clients, to judge the credibility and usefulness of this research (Lincoln, 1990).

Summary

This qualitative research project exploring social class issues in family therapy education was based on a narrative social constructionist methodology, influenced by constructivist, feminist and critical theory research. Methods chosen included the self-as-researcher, a research team, focus groups and grounded theory to guide data gathering and analysis. Four postmodern, social constructionist family therapy education programs agreed to participate. The researcher as a participant observer at each site conducted two types of focus groups: one consisting of student/therapists and one consisting of faculty/supervisors. Participants were self-selected volunteers from the program sites. Confidentiality and collaboration were two of the values that guided this research.

Five guiding questions focused the research and explored social class identity, interacting social constructs, encouraging and restraining social class and the impact of social class on therapy and therapy education. Data analysis was on going with the data gathering as audio-tapes were transcribed. The computer program, Atlas.ti, facilitated data management. Self-reflexivity was encouraged by continuous memoing by this researcher, using qualitative criteria to evaluate the process. This resulted in modifications to the research design and to the project in general. Limitations of the research were also noted.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL CLASS

What is Social Class?

In the next two chapters, I will report what I learned about social class from the participants in this research project. In this chapter, I will share participants' personal perspectives: what they thought and felt about social class, how they describe their own social class identities and its interaction with other aspects of their identity and how social class has influenced their lives. I will be focusing on participants as they speak from their personal roles, as human beings, sisters, sons, lovers, citizens of the U.S., other countries and the world. In the next chapter, *Professional Reflections*, I will explore participants' professional perspectives: how the participants see social class issues influencing their programs, the profession and their therapy/supervision in their professional and educational roles, as therapists and supervisors, as students and faculty.

Overview

There are five parts to this chapter. The headings and subheadings derived from the codes or themes that emerged from the research, except for the section on explicating my research stance and the discussion. In the first part of this chapter I will discuss both my philosophy of research engagement and some research details. I will then present a brief overview of three aspects of social class–money, power/privilege, and social ranking, using the first words "that came to mind" to participants. In the second part, I will discuss the taboo against openly and directly talking about social class including the feelings it arouses and the power and privilege it threatens to expose. In the third part I

will explore the complexity of social class identity. This includes the struggle with other aspects of our identity and its relationship to significant people in our lives as well the interplay of status and social mobility. In the fourth part, I will explore how social class with our interacting social construction of identities influences our access to resources, shaping our lifestyle, perspectives and our experiences of the world. Finally, I will discuss the significance these personal reflections have for family therapy education.

Active engagement in research

As a critical feminist, social constructionist, I take an engaged stance in the research (see Chapter 4). Rather than a stand of objectivity or neutrality, this research is a co-creative process that demands critical reflection, dialogue, self-reflexivity, researcher transparency, attention to issues of power and oppression, knowledge sharing, and desire to use the data for emancipatory action. I use the data from the research project, the participants' quotes, as a way to continue the dialogue about social class in family therapy education. As the primary research instrument, I strive to interact with this data in an appropriate, transparent way, sharing my reflections, values, stories, memories, as well as other related information in order to advance the dialogue about social class. I use myself, my body–my eyes, my ears, my heart, to experience social class and think about what is happening. At the same time, I try to learn from the other co-researchers, trying to see what they are seeing and feel what they are feeling.

Even as an engaged researcher, it is important to step back to hear and observe with new, critical ears and eyes. There is a constant, slow motion dance happening as I engage and then step back to reflect and observe. This is happening during the actual traditional "data collection" process, i.e., during the focus groups, as well as during the data analysis process. In qualitative research, these are not two distinct processes but two

aspects of the same process. During the focus groups, I am "stepping back" to critically reflect and during the times in between when I am transcribing tapes and doing data analysis, I am continuing to "research:' read, talk with others and experience social class every day in all aspects of my life. The challenge is for me to experience every day as if it were brand new, to suddenly see and appreciate the mundane and commonplace as if it were a treasure. By exposing this research *process*, I am hoping to create a more isomorphic process of making social class visible. My goal is to make this data and social class more understandable and useful for inclusion in family therapy education.

Quotes and counter-discourse indicators

As a narrative social constructionist, I used as much of the original "voices" as possible to bring the reader closer to the participants' stories about social class. Although the way I arranged them reflects my own meaning-making, making sense of the data, I have tried to be sensitive to what I thought the participant was trying to say within the original context. I edited the quotes not out of preference but because of space considerations, trying to maintain as much of the "voice" and style of the speaker as possible. Ellipses indicate a slight pause, deleted material, or the quote taken from a larger quote that might be broken up according to the different points being made. Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

One of the advantages of transcribing the audio-tapes, listening over and over to make sure I was as accurate as possible, was "hearing" things that I have since realized we often "don't hear." By this I mean we probably "hear" the things more on an emotional rather than cognitive level. This was clear with what I later called "counter-discourse indicators." These were both paralanguage such as "uhm," and phrases such as "you know" and "I mean." From the data I sensed that these were used especially before,

although occasionally after, a participant said something that was what I would call

"counter-discursive" or contrary to the dominant cultural beliefs or discourse (see

Chapter One). Sometimes the participant also repeated words or syllables just before

these indicators. These "indicators" appeared to be used when the speaker was about to

or had just finished saying something that was contrary to what the participant perceived

to be the prevailing public discourse about social class. (Research quotes are in italics).

The following is an example from my first focus group. I was terrorized before this

group and met with my research team to talk about some of my fears. We explored how

these fears were my own internalized classism that was being expressed through fear and

doubt. I suspect, however, that the participants might not have picked up on my fear

from my words although the clues were there. I have bolded these indicators.

> Lynne: **Uhm**, *I'm always interested in making visible things and so I was*
> *curious about what your thoughts are in terms of some of the,* **you know**,
> *myths and assumptions,* **uhm**, *or the things,* **you know**, *that are not visible,*
> *that are* **ki**, **kind** *of commonly,* **uhm**, *held, especially in the United States*
> *about social class. You have alluded to some of those things in terms of*
> *the sense of social class being fixed,* **uhm**, *and the sense that,* **you know**,
> **uhm**, *being tied to money,* **uhm**, *what are some of the other assumptions?*

Participants indicated that they rarely shared stories about social class, especially in

academic and professional contexts. I believe that this actual sharing of class-based

stories was a courageous act of resistance against the public discourse. The sharing of the

meaning of those stories was also counter-discursive. When it began to dawn on me,

how clear people were about this by their use of these counter-discourse indicators,

"uhm," "you know" and "I mean," I realized what a profound and courageous step this

was for people. It made me realize how aware we are of the public discourse of our

classlessness and how we have internalized it. On another protected level, we hold

closely another reservoir of stories. These indicators are symbols of acts of courage. I am profoundly grateful to be a witness and a companion to these stories.

What Pops into Your Head?

> *Social class, what does that mean? Are we talking socio-economic level, are we talking annual income, are we talking education? . . . Can you have a Ph.D. but be on welfare and still be considered high or middle class? Can you . . . have less than a high school education but win the lottery, and all of a sudden you're high class?*

The first question I asked participants was what images, thoughts, or phrases came to mind when I said "social class." Participants had a variety of reactions. Most centered around three ideas (1) money/economics; (2) privilege and access to resources; and (3) descriptors that identified one's social position vis a vis others, i.e. ranking. The other ideas offered were connected to at least one of these areas.

Money/economics

In the context of social class in the United States, the first word that came immediately to many participants' minds was *money* sometimes expressed as *finances*, *economics* and once, as *income*. Other participants verbally or non-verbally agreed. It seems that money, or the lack of money, is the most visible symbol of social class in the U.S. Almost as quickly as saying money, however, either the same participants or others added phrases that indicated that social class was "not just" or "more than" money. By the time we moved from "images, words and phrases" into discussion about social class, the conversation quickly pointed beyond money.

> *in America, social class is really based upon economics and income, money . . . capitalism. And then I'm thinking social class in reference to India where it's more of a social, uhm, construction and...uhm, those who are higher up on the, you know the list, uhm, end up probably making more money than those who are the lower. . . .*

> *in this country, class is very closely associated with income or financial resources. Uhm, that's not . . . how I grew up, I think it's not nearly so much connected with income. Uhm, since I have lived in this country I've always thought, of myself as being financially restricted but never poor. . . by definition with the culture I would have been considered poor, but . . . it has to do also with, uhm, with culture . . . and with status . . . .*

> *Money is an interesting issue because…that's the first thing that came to my mind, but it really doesn't have to do with money. It has to do with social rules and, uhm, just how, how you interact and what your ideas are.*

These participants recognized social class in the United States is strongly connected with money. Each of them, however, thought that social class has a social aspect beyond the financial. Collectively, they mentioned culture, status, social rules, social interaction, and what I would call world-view.

The idea that social class in the US was first connected to economics but also was related to social aspects seemed to be consistent throughout the research project. Realizing how strongly this belief is held, it makes me wonder about the seemingly equal belief about social mobility. If someone begins to make more or less money, how does that effect their social class position in the United States? Does upward or downward social mobility mean that someone's economic position has changed, their social position has changed or both? Is there a difference, as these participants seem to indicate? Why do we call this change in ranking social rather than economic mobility? Perhaps other ideas that came to people's minds will bring clarification.

Power, privilege and access to resources

The second most common response that "popped" into people's heads after money was *power*, *privilege* and *access to resources* or the lack thereof, the latter which one participant defined as *deplecient*.

> *I heard in my head, the word: deplecient . . . the issue of not just of material things but of all, all kinds of different depletions of resources.*

Power, privilege and opportunity were words that came to mind for several people. Power is connected to *privilege* or ability and *opportunity* or possibility to *access resources.* This participant defined power as the ability to "direct and dictate" one's life in order to achieve one's wants and goals.

> It just comes down to power, and power over, uhm, you know, one another, power over, uhm your own life and your own ability to, you know, achieve your goals. . . . we all have our own values and goals and things that we want ...it's like how much power we have to achieve those, you know, depends in part on those demographic or characteristics: female, race, uhm, you know, whatever strengths or limitations, sexual preference and orientation, and so forth which in part determine, uhm, our ability to achieve our goals because of how much power we have, uhm, to direct and dictate our own lives.

Money often determined what power, privileges or access people had to resources, including several *resources* that "came to mind" for participants such as *neighborhoods,* particular *regions,* and *country club.* Unfortunately, *health* and *health care*, both mentioned by several participants, was about *privileged access to resources* as a participant who works in a medical setting explained.

> I'm painfully aware if you have no money in this country then you get no health care in a lot of places. Privilege and class and health and life and death have all become all mushed in my head because you can work but . . . you can be half dead and get no assistance from the health care system.

Education for a number of participants, seeming to be linked with the idea of *power* and *privilege.* One of the participants later talked about *education* as a structural oppressor and its link to money. The next participants talked about *education* and the power to record history as something that wasn't always related to money. Both link education with *privilege* or *opportunity.*

> health care, housing, all these things are determined ...based on your income...it's again inseparably linked with, education which I think is the greatest structural oppressor, ... some people have an opportunity to get an education while other people don't...all based on income.

[it's] a lot more complex than either having money or not having money.
I was brought up in terms of uhm, having generations of education, uhm, .
. . I almost feel uncomfortable talking about it (coughs) uhm, because it's,
it's related to, uhm, that whole concept of who records history. . . . in one
part of my family, I know five hundred years or more, where they go . . .
who wrote that, who kept that up, you know, and it wasn't always related
with having money. It was often related to education, uhm, but certainly
being part of that, just being born into that gave me certain privileges . . . .

I am struck by two things when reflecting on these quotes. Each shared similar ideas about the importance of education and the privilege and opportunities that it brings. Yet, they were slightly different perspectives. One said it was linked to money – income– while the other says it was a lot more complex than money or the lack of it. The first participant also indicated that while education brought opportunity, it also was a structural oppressor. The second participant stated an uncomfortableness while pointing out the privilege of being born into that background. Critical theorist Ivan Illich (1976) who wrote *Deschooling Society*. saw formal education which he called schooling as means of socializing citizens into conforming to the dominant discourse, an idea that is echoed by Michel Foucault (1972). How education is used to spread privilege to those who are "born into it" while opening the doors of access to a few others either via money or status. I wonder what the social rules are for those who are given this privilege? How are we socialized into believing that we deserve this privilege, that we have earned it? How do we then take on the mantle of gatekeepers to keep so many out, perhaps allowing in a few deserving who we know will conform to the rules?

The second thought I had about education was an image that came to mind, a friend who has worked on the maintenance crew for the last fifteen years at this university. I invited her to speak to my class on working-class women and she told the story of being denied the opportunity to become a nurse because of oppressive experiences of sexism

and racism. She left a profound impact on these students when she pointed out the gift of being able to get an education. She challenged them to use it to make it a better world. How can we take up this challenge without being socialized into believing this privilege of education is only for a deserving few? Education was an idea that came up often in the focus groups as all participants had or were pursuing advanced degrees or postgraduate training. Education will be explored further when discussing access to resources.

> *Oppression pops into my head, I guess, oppression and then privilege.*

Looking over the transcripts, *oppression* was not a word that the majority of the participants used in regards to social class, although they described experiences that I would call oppressive. Reflecting their experience back to them using the word oppression, they seemed to agree. Oppression is the crushing of personal *power* and the stripping of legitimate *privilege* for the purpose of denying access and exploitation.

One participant mentioned *independence*, which I think of as the privilege of having the power to have freedom from oppression. Other words that "came up" linked to the absence of *privilege* were *THE SYSTEM, shame, and social activism.*

> *I'm thinking about THE SYSTEM in capital letters and working families. I think about working class, the external systems that they're enmeshed in.*

> *Poverty and shame . . . and . . . who defines class and how is it defined in a way that helps sustain the structure of the hierarchy? And uhm, you know, . . . just pernicious self-determination . . . .*

Social activism is taking action to challenge, change or alleviate oppression. How is the "pernicious" myth of " self-determination" in conflict with *social activism*?

> *And what social class also means to me is social activism and social change, 'cause if we didn't have social classes, there would be less, umh, necessity simply for social change.*

Social position and ranking

Many participants talk about social class as being something beyond *money* and beyond *power, privilege and access to resources* although linked to both. The third grouping of words that came up about social class were labels or descriptors that position people in hierarchical social location *vis a vis* others. These positions denote *hierarchy* with some having more *status* and others having less *status* depending on each person's relationships or connections. Presumably, those with more *status* usually have more *money, power, privilege*, and *access to resources*.

> who you were connected to . . . also elevated one's status in terms of . . .
> who you're related to.

> Usually when we talk about class, it's sort of a code for poor people, or
> the elite, the same way that "race" is code for minority.

Phrases that popped up to describe these social positions were the haves and have nots, the poor and the rich, the very privileged and very poor, lower and upper ends of the spectrum, and the upwardly mobile and downwardly mobile. Similar labels included the middle class, upper class, lower class, working families and working-class.

> polarization typically, the haves and the have-nots . . . in so many realms.

Participants commented on how people make social class assumptions based on their *perceptions* of how *money* and *access to resources* influence people's *appearance*

> how other people regard people, uhm, in terms of differences and while
> that may be based on money, but it's not always based on money.

> The way you dress, your customs, your quirks.

> you know, the first thing that does come to my mind is, if you had had this
> conversation with me . . . probably about two years ago, I would have said
> money. And now I'm starting to think more on appearance really . . . I
> think we make a lot of judgments about people just based on their haircut,
> the clothes they wear, the shoes they wear and what have you, uhm.

Participants talked about how people's social positioning had an impact on their

values or the idea that a change in social position would result in a change of *values*.

> *Uhm, for me, what pops into my head is the ways in which people are defined by, uhm, financial or economic needs as well as their values.*

> *what is class, who's defining it? . . . that's the point I try to make with my parents, because they think that I feel my in-laws are better than they are because my in-laws own this nice big house . . . and both have advanced degrees. . . . sure they may be blessed in those respects but there are other things that they might not be so blessed in. It's not always about money. . .*

Racism and *skin color* both were words that immediately came to mind when

participants thought about social class.

> *depending on your race, uhm, you know, people may not see class… Everyone is assumed to be pretty much in the same, uhm, class and the view of class that's taken by, uhm, for . . . African Americans doesn't always "fit" the view that's taken by, you know, European Americans.*

Throughout these focus groups, race, gender, sexual orientation and other social

constructs influenced the way people experienced and perceived social class ranking.

These differences added complexity to social class and social class identity and will be

explored in more detail later in this chapter.

The images and phrases that participants in this study *immediately* associated with

social class in the United States can be grouped into three ideas. Social class is

associated with (1) *money* which often points beyond to (2) *power, privilege and access

to resources* and (3) *higher status* in the *hierarchical ranking system*. Having higher

status usually gives one more *power*, opportunities, and *money* but does higher status

mean the same as a higher social class? What other factors determine power and access?

Where do values come in? How do we define social class?

> *people who attained a higher educational status but does that mean that their class has changed, their values that they held . . . you know, because they have made a shift educationally, would they have also made a class*

> *shift? Just because they have made a financial shift does that mean they*
> *have made a class shift? . . . the intrinsic values that you have, do those*
> *stay with you or do those need to shift, too? . . . so I start sort of getting*
> *lost because I start wanting to talk about money or you know, so it's hard*
> *for me to sometimes integrate all this together.*

Perhaps one of the reasons we do not talk about social class is its complexity, juggling

at least three different aspects of social class.

> *the whole topic itself, is convoluted, and complex. . . . a lot has to do with*
> *the dominant culture in terms of who sets the standards.uhm..for what this*
> *whole thing means and how it shows up in society, you know?.*

What are other reasons we do not talk about social class? Participants had some ideas.

Social Class: Taboo?

> *People don't want to talk about it, we assume that this is a classless*
> *society, but we are so class oriented . . . I don't think it's hidden. . . .*
> *people don't wanna recognize it. I mean, people want to believe that our*
> *society is a classless society, that we have this equal opportunity to move*
> *up through kind of the classes. So . . . it's paradoxical.*

The following excerpts from a focus group conversation illustrates some of the

difficulty in talking openly about social class.

> *everybody knows and maybe whispers about it but it's not talked about.*

> *It's uncomfortable talking about how much money you have or what*
> *you're able to do around people. And what you're not able to do, the*
> *money you don't have.*

> *people who are up tend to look down on the others who haven't made it*
> *and those who are at the bottom end of it, don't want to talk about it . . . .*

> *those in the middle want to keep their head above water and not fall down.*
> *{A sigh followed by groupsilence}.*

As the next participant concluded

> *I've been taught ...why do you want to even bring it up?*

In spite of this reluctance, social class conversations do go on. What allows or encourages these discussions? This participant suggested social class discussions occur frequently for the "end of the social class that doesn't have power privilege or access."

> *If you are of the, the, uhm, end of the social class that doesn't have power, privilege, and access, then that conversation goes on a lot. Here on the other end, I think it doesn't go on hardly any . . . I'm probably more aware and talk about it more than other people who would be in my particular social class. We're talking in general, but uhm, I think the discussion does go on, depending on where you are in the [social class spectrum].*

This participant seems to situate herself "on the other end" that doesn't talk about social class. How did this participant gain "insider knowledge" of what happens on the other end of social class that does discuss social class? How can we be more open to issues of social class that do not support our class interests?

The next participant contrasts the United States with Australia, which was initially involuntarily inhabited both by political prisoners and many indebted paupers, the lowest social classes. This apparently influenced the attitude about discussing social class.

> *I spent two years in Australia . . . It's different than here ...if you think about the founding principles of Australia, uhm, the convicts . . . settled there rather than people who pursued religious or expression freedom. And this society was built pretty much so that there were benefits to the working-class and that was the attitude up until a few decades ago*

How does the social class (and gender, race, sexual orientation) of our founding "fathers" influence the kind of discourse about social class that is reflected in our educational, medical, social service, legal and political systems? How do we duplicate these dominant cultural assumptions in our profession and in our "training" programs? Who is served by this discourse?

Vulnerability and Other Tender Layers

Research participants spoke of the subject of social class being "in the back of their minds;" sometimes it "comes up" in the conversation or they might "bring it up." Social class is discussed very tentatively; participants seemed reluctant to engage in conversation. A recurrent theme was the degree of emotion, poignancy and vulnerability experienced while talking about these issues. One of the participants flatly said, "I'm not going there" and acknowledged that this was a subject not even discussed with friends,

> *I had that moment earlier. It was non-verbal and I didn't want to articulate it. I had this moment when I was listening to all this and I thought, there some real deep emotion in this subject for me and I'm not really going to probably go there, and I'm not going to articulate it, but there is, (laugh), I can relate. (Pause) And it's so complex, I sort of feel like I couldn't begin; we'd have to be here on my story all night . . . .*

Emotions including shame, rage, embarrassment and fear were mentioned. One participant talked about how "fiery" she felt discussing the subject although she did not think of herself as a confrontational person. Another participant addressed the discomfort of discussing this subject. Still another expressed surprise that she dared share the things she did, almost as if breaking a rule, perhaps of self-protection. Several wanted social class defined, possibly to get a sense of control over this slippery and nebulous subject, and perhaps to understand my own dominant discourse. One participant confessed,

> *my fear would be in offending someone and trying to talk about it and sort of flubbing around with words that might have a certain meaning to someone else, you know, . . . a put down . . . . Yeck!*

Another commented,

> *If there's anything that I've learned about this evening is that layers of it are definitely very tender, with a whole room of therapists you could almost sense that everyone had layers of it that they wouldn't penetrate.*

Why do we not penetrate it? What are we afraid of?

Silenced

Several participants talked about feeling silenced when social class was discussed. I wondered who had felt that way during the focus group experiences. One participant out of all the groups chose not to share. Were the focus groups another exercise in feeling silenced about social class for some? How did I collude or contribute to that silencing? What other times did participants feel silenced? How do participants both as students and faculty feel silenced in the programs? How do we all feel silenced regarding social class in any of our educational and other social settings? This participant has felt silenced about discussing social class experiences and also addresses the complexity of social class. One of the reasons for the silencing appears to be disinterest in understanding the participant's culture.

> *that gets into my cultural context, and part of why I won't speak about it is because . . . it is very, very complex and very, very deeply emotional for me because I grew up in an area with just unspeakable poverty. And I just don't speak about it. Uhm, and have been, I suppose sufficiently silenced about rural [state], and perceived that even the intellectuals in this country are not interested really at all.*

One of the things that was reinforced for me with this story was the importance of learning about people's social class issues in context. If we don't take the time or have the interest to understand how social class is embedded and plays out in people's particular class experiences, we risk silencing them by making assumptions about their lives. Even "unspeakable poverty" has its own unique face in each cultural context and within the each personal lived experience. We must avoid essentializing experiences.

Embarrassment

Several participants who identified themselves from middle or upper class backgrounds talked about a sense of embarrassment discussing social class. Another

middle class participant talked about the feeling of being "like a child" when discussing social class. She talked about her growing awareness of her class privilege and blindness to the oppression of others. A participant already quoted talking about her fear of offending others. Others talked about feeling a sense of confusion about what they "should" feel or a sense of blindness for not seeing their privilege.

> *I feel embarrassed. . . . It's different because I'm not the same social class here as I'm back home because here I think I am at poverty level but still, you know, sometimes I can't see that I have the privilege. . . . when somebody points out, it's . . . kind of embarrassment . . . . And I'm not politically correct, or socially aware.*

> *it took me a long time, it's through my clients that I come incontact with different levels of life and there's a sense of guilt . . . you probably come from a higher class, you know, and then there is this sense of embarrassment . . . . like am I aware, am I being, uhm, snobbish in terms of how I am expressing such things? . . . that total oblivion about what I am saying and being, and doing to, to everybody around me.*

Each of us experiences privileges on some level or in some context, although some more than others. I, too, have felt embarrassed when I realized how blind and oblivious I have been to the pain, suffering and oppression of others. I have not always been as courageous as these participants in acknowledging my blindness, privilege, and embarrassment. I wonder how privilege invites blindness? How can we become more sensitive to blindness? How do we take responsibility for that blindness without it becoming the responsibility of those less privileged to teach us about what we are missing? How can we embrace our embarrassment, confusion and arrogance and work through them rather than hiding them? If we feel too vulnerable and tender at the moment, how can we be gentle with ourselves without repressing this experience?

If we have also experienced class oppression, how can we challenge without either taking responsibility for the other person's arrogance or protecting them from their pain

and internalizing our own? How can we have compassion without stepping back from expecting justice? How do we know when it's too dangerous to do that? If it is too dangerous, how can we be silent and still have a sense of integrity? Can we?

Social class is a very powerful subject that is often very painful and risky to talk about, especially in the United States where inequality is not "supposed" to exist. Discussing social class exposes social stratification, weakens our collective belief systems, and raises to awareness dimensions of our privilege or oppression in this land of liberty where some are freer than others.

Pride

Participants spoke with a sense of pride over their own, their parents and grandparent's and other family members' accomplishments. They recounted stories of parents' sacrificing for their children, and the loyalty to the values that their parents passed on. One participant talked about her pride as she looked back and realized the struggles her parents had gone through and what they had instilled in their children:

> *I would have more pride or more loyalty as an adult than I would have when I was eighteen . . . I wouldn't have thought it was quite so cool, you know, not being able to appreciate the struggles, what my family had to go through. . . . "My parents kicked ass, man." You know, look what they did for us, and look what they gave up and look at the values that we have and sort of how we see things in a lot of different areas as a result of that.*

Another participant echoed a number of participants in the research project on how proud she was of her mother who had personally triumphed after years of struggling as a single parent raising and supporting her family after a divorce.

> *she's worked her way up herself and has done very well, uhm, she's financially independent . . . and so, I'm real proud of what she's been able to do because I don't have to support her. And she's self-sufficient . . . .*

Another participant had similar pride in her grandparents' struggles and hard work on both sides of her family and how that set the foundation for her extended maternal family's opportunities for advanced education.

> *My mother's family, we're all dirt farmers...but there was the presumption for all of their children that you will work, and you will accomplish, and you will value what you have, and you will take care of it. So, with five kids, there were fourteen first cousins, there was only one who didn't graduate from college, and of those thirteen, I was one of two that didn't have at least a masters. Everybody else is either a MD, a Ph.D., a DDS.*

This participant's paternal grandfather was a country doctor who had status in his Southern home town but not a lot of money. Hard work and accomplishments were honored and valued by their descendents. While their own economic lifestyles had improved considerably, there was a strong sense of family loyalty and appreciation for the sweat and the values that helped pave the way for those financial successes.

Some participants expressed "double-dip" feelings: along with the pride there were other feelings mixed in. One participant's grandparents beamed with pride at their grandchild's doctoral graduation while her grandmother was more fearful and practical.

> *When I completed my Ph.D., I had a couple of mixed messages from my paternal grandparents. And one was their pride in me. My grandfather, saying to me on the day that I graduated, 'This is so amazing. You know, you're two generations removed from someone who couldn't write his own name versus my grandmother who is petrified that I won't get a job because I have this degree and it overqualifies me for any normal kind of job. "You'll have too much and no one will compensate you for all those years that you've been in school.*

Shame

There seemed to be a similarity between the pride that these participants felt in their parents, grandparents, other family members and the pride this next participant discusses regarding culture. When society looks down upon people who struggle as individuals, as groups such as single mothers, as a social class or even as a culture, there can be a fierce

loyalty and identification with those who are misconstrued, maligned, oppressed and possibly feared. There may be other feelings as well.

> *I sometimes wonder if the pride isn't correlated with the shame of the culture. When you know someone deeply misunderstands your culture, the pride you take in your culture is all the deeper. It's almost directly proportional to the misunderstandings, or maybe that's too mild a word, the hatred or the silences . . . .*

Other participants shared how they experienced shame as children when their family used food stamps to survive.

> *we were very working class. Uhm, I distinctly remember that it was always a struggle to make ends meet, I remember being on food stamps, and free lunches and being really ashamed, even horrified. What are people thinking about me using food stamps?*

How often do we discuss clients who access social services in our courses and supervision? As faculty, do we invite the experiences of our students to share their expertise and first-hand perspectives as recipients or do we assume as I sometimes have, that most of our students come from middle class backgrounds? How often did I find it appropriate to share that I still am a recipient of the "gaze" of the state social services as the guardian of a mentally challenged sibling? Or do I always err on the side of being the "objective" professional, using my code of ethics to protect me?

Classism is rampant in this country and like many other "isms" or oppression, it is often internalized. Someone once told me they thought that children spend their lives working through the life struggles of their parents. Certainly, the internalized oppression of parents affects children. This, however, focuses on the intra-dynamics of a person and their impact on the family system without a sense of the societal context that initially created the oppression and continues to actively oppress all generations. The classism that affected the elder generation continues to exist although it may take different forms.

In addition to class discrimination, other forms of domination interact to create a confusing web of oppression. At times it is difficult to know where the sticky strands of homophobia, racism, ageism, ableism, sexism, gender bias, or anti-religious/spiritual sentiment ends and the classism takes over or how they are woven together. This "matrix of domination" comes in many shades and forms. While it sometimes bares its hatred in full force, it often seeps through in more subtle and covert ways. One of the ways it leaks its venom is by the propagation of stereotypes that are meant to foster fear, envy and enslaving assumptions. One participant shared the fatal impact of this bondage on her father and the legacy of its tendrils of shame that impacted her "beyond the financial."

> *I know for me that it's around, uhm, shame . . . for me, I know it's about being Jewish and that when you ask the majority of the populations, the first thing that comes to mind when you say Jewish, they think money. I'm thinking . . . about my father who died at 56 because he wasn't good enough. You know, uhm, that's an insidious sense of beyond the financial.*

How does this anti-Semitism continue to plague our programs? How do we know if we do not talk about it? How have we contributed to this silence? What other aspects of culture are silenced and shamed? How does the particular diversity of the faculty and student body both make more visible and more possible to discuss some aspects of culture while silencing others? Which conversations become more central and take up more room? Which gets marginalized? How blind are the faculty to that which is clear to students? How do we open the space to discuss this without making it the responsibility of the students to take the risks to teach the faculty?

Contempt

> *the terms related to class, the nouveau riche which suggests that someone has, uhm, transcended the hierarchy, has made it up there but they're still looked down upon. "Poor white trash" . . . that's such an ancient term...it's been around at least two hundred years, uhm, what does that signify that someone who is white and poor, but their manner is very low?*

I remember my bewilderment and embarrassment when I saw the pained and stricken look on the face of a dear friend who had helped me through one of the most painful times in my life, a time when I struggled through both material poverty and poverty of spirit surrounded by life-threatening poverty. I had made some comment about "white trash." I do not remember it as being derogatory. In fact, I do not remember now what I said. My friend's betrayed face remains etched in my mind. We had never really shared much about our past backgrounds, certainly not from a social class perspective. I had assumed she was from a middle class background because of some of the expectations of her then-current lifestyle. I knew she had some childhood struggles but I had assumed that had been familial, not necessarily class-based. With a careless phrase, I showed contempt for her class experiences, the unacknowledged struggles, probably the very struggles that helped her be so empathetic to my struggles with poverty. I invalidated her life experiences.

I suppose she may have assumed the same about me, especially with my master's degree. I rarely talked about the complexity of my social class background. The childhood that barely stretched to meet physical needs and made "wants" not worth dreaming about. Yet the security of my family life that normalized my life and often protected me from the lifestyles and judgements of other families who had "made it." My parents' status and connections in the many communities in which we lived protected me from internalizing at least the image of being "white trash" even when we lived in a travel trailer in a rural, rough and tumble trailer park.

I learned the damaging power of labels that day. Since we did not talk about it, distance soon grew in our relationship, and as we each relocated, we lost touch. Perhaps

we had lost touch the moment I had uttered those fatal words and then hid my own

embarrassment. The lasting damage was not my ignorance: the classist words that I had

picked up and carelessly tossed around. The betrayal came when I refused to

acknowledge and take responsibility for my ignorance and the pain that I had caused. My

excuse was that I was too embarrassed; I had not intentionally hurt my friend. How often

do we do the same in our programs and even in therapy? It is not surprising that we pick

up and reproduce the classist words and assumptions that circulate in our culture. What

are we all doing to challenge those oppressions, acknowledge our ignorance and learn

from those who have been denied our privileges? How does our program structure time

and resources to be sensitive to the ways we replicate elitism with people's differing

cultures whether newly blessed with financial resources or financially struggling?

Anger

Social class inequality raises anger, fury and outrage, especially in those who have

experienced this injustice. This participant rejected the label "lower class" with its

implications that being "lower class" meant her family was stupid and dirty.

> *hearing the word "lower class," thinking, "Huh, that can't be us!"*
> *Because there is this sense of again, hierarchy and that you do ascribe a*
> *certain level of, uhm, unintelligence, slovenliness, and I remember looking*
> *around thinking, but we're not that way, you know, we're clean, and we're*
> *smart, and all this other stuff so how can that be? We don't have much*
> *money but there was something about" "lower" that sort of rankled . . . ."*

Joanna Kadi (1996) in *Thinking Class* challenged the classist assumptions that

working class/working poor people who are often denied access and have to overcome

incredible obstacles to pursue formal education are stupid and lazy. She confronted the

beliefs that privilege a particular kind of intelligence over practical intelligence and

wisdom that is learned by the struggle to survive in a inhospitable environment. Society

recognizes and validates the struggles of those who finally get letters after their names while ignoring and looking down on those who work with their hands, often supporting privileged access to an education. One of the participants talked about recognizing and appreciating this work everyday, including the class, race and gender implications.

> *it makes me exceedingly clear…there isn't a day I walk into this building when I'm not totally mindful as I walk up the pathway. I think of how nice it is for me to walk up to see this ground well-salted and see these two guys out shoveling snow outside in twenty-six degree weather and I have tenure. I get in the warm building and here's…you know, somebody's mother, somebody's daughter, big-ass mop, cleaning. I see it every day.*

Social class inequities causes anger in those who are denied adequate quality health care because of financial need. That "entitlement" apparently makes more affluent people angry, too. This was an exchange in one of the focus groups.

> *I've seen people comment on people who are very rich's sense of entitlement…as well as someone who's very poor's sense of entitlement. Both can have a sense of entitlement of what they expect and what they should have. … I always would have thought it was just the rich who had a sense of entitlement but when the poor do, it makes people very angry.*
>
> *Does it make poor people angry or rich people angry that the poor people have that sense of entitlement?*

A participant whose family had lived on food stamps at one time, shared her indignation about suddenly being considered a prospective friend because she was more affluent. She expressed envy for the freedom from worry these "friends" experienced. They were oblivious, unaware of their privileged security.

> *two emotions went through my mind… a little bit of anger and jealousy… when I did get to the upper class and my parents were making money, people that never would have been my friends . . . really wealthy families, started approaching me and becoming friends with me. . . . underneath the jealousy of, you don't even know, if I only had your life and never had to worry about anything and knew that my college is going to all be paid for by my parents and that even if I didn't get a job my parents would still support me 'til I got married to some rich doctor…and that I wouldn't have to worry again. . . . people having so much and not even realizing it.*

Fear . . . of falling

People who have lived "on the other end of the spectrum" realize that life can be precarious and difficult, not because of stupidity, or lack of hard work, or immoral values, or other myths that society has attempted to foist on us. Rather, it is because of the social position one was born into, the color of one's skin, one's sex and/or a catastrophic event that happened to family members. If you were born poor, whatever skin color, if you suffered a prolonged illness, divorce, disability, death of a parent or other significant issues, you know you could "go back there." That fear often invades people's sense of security. It can make people realize the limits of protection that material things can bring. On the other hand, it can lurk in the back of one's mind, exerting influence over people's choices and life perspectives.

> *My mother made all my clothes. I mean, even to my underwear . . . . It's a really humiliating experience and yet, you know, I look back on that now and think, wow, I mean, what effort she put into, you know, actually making sure that we did have clothes that were clean and put together.... And the same thing with the soup pot, you know, soup every night on the back of the stove. . . . everything was saved. My father saved everything, even when he didn't have to. And it makes me really aware of how, uhm, how really unsettling and awful the experiences of poverty must be, that those fears can't be changed. They had to remain somewhat stingy for their whole lives even when they had plenty...they were probably more generous with me and my sister than they were with themselves until the end when mother was dying and they just started traveling everywhere. It has an impact . . . your representation of the world is that you have to be really careful because you never know, you know, when you're going to need it, so let's save all the string you can find, every cigar box . . . .*

Those who have experienced life on the other side of the tracks or at the bottom of the ladder, often evoke memories of their previous life and their "fear of falling." Several middle class participants from economically disadvantaged backgrounds talked about the possibility of "falling" from their more comfortable present economic situations to the more difficult circumstances of their childhood. These participants know from first hand

experience the struggle that comes from less privileged living. They have punctured the illusion of upward mobility as a reward for those "good," "deserving" people who only need to set their minds on a goal and be willing to work hard enough to achieve them.

While they and/or their parents may have reached the middle class by a combination of hard work and being able to take advantage of opportunities, they all know "good" people who have not "made it." These people also have worked long hours at backbreaking, dangerous jobs with little financial reward or change of lifestyle. In the introduction to this chapter, as part of the first dialogue, the third participant talked about those in the middle classes that want to "keep their head above water and not fall down." Part of the collective sigh following that statement was the acknowledgment that yes, that is a disturbing possibility. Another participant expressed her worry that even with her degree, she might not be able to provide for her children or have the luxury of being involved in their school activities because, "What if…?"

> I've made it this far. I'm in graduate school and I'm working towards the point that I'll have a degree and I won't have to worry as much, that fear of "What if" there's no market for a therapist or what if I have to struggle, what if I can't work or having my kids have to worry about eating or never being able to be involved in school activities because I don't have the money to do it . . . that underlying worry. Maybe it will always be there….

None of the participants from either middle or upper class childhood backgrounds alluded to this as a concern. One participant who identified himself as always upper middle class talked about his own privileged sense of safety as compared to his wife's whose family experienced unemployment and constant financial difficulties.

Five of the most challenging cases I have worked with have been adults who have come from upper-middle class homes where at least one of their parents have been

professional people. Each of these clients has experienced unemployment, which has resulted in downward mobility. Katherine Newman (1988) called this "falling from grace" in her book of that name. The difference between the participants that talked about their fear of falling and my clients as well as the most affected subjects of Newman's book was that the latter two groups had bought into the "American Dream." They were not prepared and hence were more vulnerable when they fell through the cloud of illusions. They crashed into the reality that working hard enough and playing by the rules did not protect them from being "refugees from the middle class."

Quite a few participants in this study have been inoculated against this illusion. Whether or not they have already experienced unemployment in their lives, they know they have the possibility of being victimized in spite of themselves. They have either personally or vicariously experienced the failure of the American Dream through issues of social class, gender, race and/or other barriers. The hardest hit in Newman's study were those who had always been middle class and who had internalized the mythology, leaving only themselves to be responsible for their "failure." This also was true for my clients, although several blamed their parents for not preparing them for this possibility. Most of their parents had been middle class and had never experienced downward mobility. My clients' "failures" have been challenging not only to themselves, but also for their extended families that had viewed them as having all the ingredients to be "successful" people. The fear of, as well as the reality of, "falling from grace" is a potential clinical issue for all but the most independently wealthy clients who have extended safety nets of connections and finances. Even upper class clients who have wealthy families may face the threat of disinheritance.

For those who break the taboo and talk about the fears, other feelings, or social class issues in general, there is the reward of learning from others who have survived. Many skills are acquired by those who have survived long-term experiences of financial struggles in their working-class families. Several of my middle class clients who "fell from grace" regretted that their parents had not taught them survival skills. One of the skills that two participants in the study talked about was the importance of not wasting resources. This is an invaluable lesson I learned from my own childhood. It is a skill that has helped us to survive on very little money. Two participants in one group shared their experiences of living with people who have not had the same experiences of scarcity.

> The messages that I got growing up were "Don't be wasteful with food," "Don't be wasteful of money," "Don't be wasteful with what you have, period." . . . Uhm, I'm well off because my husband is a lawyer, so I don't have to worry about a thing or so I'm told. (Laughs). But, uhm, he had different messages and I freak out when I see more toilet paper in the trashcan because, you know, he is just wasting it.

This participant bought things on clearance and says that will never change, no matter what her class. She wondered by what criteria social class is defined. She also alluded to a fear of falling, when she confronted him with leftovers one night:

> Take your pick; leftovers smorgasbord . . . it doesn't make sense for me to throw out all this food." And he always says, "Well, we'll just throw out, go to [store name] and get some more." "You're missing the point." (Laughs again). "You don't waste what you have, uh, cause you never know when you might not have it any more!

This prompted another female participant in the group to remark:

> I identify a lot with the saving . . . and not throwing things away . . . I had a roommate and I'd be like, "My God, how much toilet paper does she use! . . . I'm not understanding this! (Laughter erupts). "Waste not, want not." You know, you're going to go farther and have more if you can save a little bit today . . . you know, scrimp on that toilet paper, man. You know?

Talking about our fears, our shame, our embarrassments and our pride exorcises the taboo of social class, releasing our individual and collective powers to name the problem and find solutions for those things that are within our power to address and releasing our sense of humor to put into perspective those things beyond our control.

"If We Don't Talk About It, It Doesn't Exist"

> *Sometimes we try not to focus on, uhm, social issues. . . . there is this, this thing that, uhm, somehow equalization can come by not realizing; by not talking about it. . . . you know, if we talk about it, it becomes an issue.*
>
> *It becomes everybody's problem, not just the person's problem.*

Social class is an issue that affects everyone. Everyone suffers by not discussing it. We are all oppressed by classism, but not equally; some suffer a great deal more than others. To the degree that we have privilege, we may be able to collude with the invisibility of social class outside of our own. There are rare but wonderful people who are sensitive, courageous and humble enough to recognize, and name their privilege – who have a sense of wonder in the gifts that are around them. Too often, it is those who are "below" or on the "underside" of the "ladder" who are aware, who have no choice but to be aware. In other instances, especially with more privilege, the taboo has been internalized. The issues of social class in the "back of the mind" are pushed away as too painful. The fear of bringing up and disturbing the murky layers of feelings, memories and thoughts that lie buried can be overwhelming. For many, it is more practical to continue struggling without muddying the waters with thoughts and sensations over which there seems to be little control.

Whether we bring up that information forth depends on several issues. One, it depends on how each of us was brought up and whether we were taught to name and say out loud those issues. It depends on who is around. Often, people share what's "on their

minds" either when they perceive they have more privilege than those in their company or they perceive that they have about the same amount of privilege. Again, there are rare individuals who have the courage to name and make visible those differences they perceive between themselves and others. Speaking and naming the issue comes with risks and it may depend on what the consequences are for doing the unspeakable.

If we ignore social class, the inequalities will not go away but we do not need to be responsible for "it." We won't need to look at our own privilege, share the power we have enjoyed, face our terror, pain, and our helplessness. We will not need to sort out the double messages that we get from our experiences and what we are taught through our schooling, our history books, our newspapers and media, our places of worship and our politicians. For those of us who have felt class oppression, we can continue to protect ourselves from dangerous exposure. We risk being blamed and shamed. Those in power blame those who are most powerless to do something about the situation. We make them our scapegoat for those things we feel too helpless to fix, without losing our privilege.

> *I don't think it's hidden. I think people don't wanna recognize it maybe. I mean, people, I think, want to believe that, that our society is a classless society, that we have this equal opportunity to move up through kind of the classes. So, in some sense it's paradoxical, that I don't want to talk about it, it's not there but I can still put you somewhere . . . .*

A number of participants thought social class is not discussed because we do not want to think about disturbing possibilities or deal with overwhelming realities. If we segregate ourselves within gated neighborhoods that visually protect us from images of financial struggle, if we shop at different stores and worship in different neighborhoods, if we work at elite occupations, we avoid putting a human face on "them." If we silence people by making it the norm not to talk about negative class experiences and blame people for their own misfortunes when they do break this taboo, we can try to create the

illusion that inequality doesn't exist. It props up the caricature of "them," creating the essential, uni-dimensional "Other." The more diverse the images presented in the media or experienced through friendships, work and other social relationships, the more likely one of "them" is similar to the dominant "us" and this is extremely dangerous. "We" need to keep "the other" at least at arm's length to avoid any sense of responsibility to change the situation as well as to avoid the terror.

> *people gravitate towards what's familiar and fear what is different. So, I think there's often times a fear of, you know, people coupling out, out of their class. . . . and fears what that might mean, in terms of, uh, being valued or being judged, uhm, . . . there is an aversion to mixing of class, you know? . . . Why would you want to be with them?*

Cherrie Moraga (1983) said it is not differences that are feared but the similarities, fearing the awareness of the "same aches, the same longings" of the dehumanized (p.56).

Intra-class conversations

A participant in the research project quoted earlier felt that discussion about social class occurs frequently on the end of the social class continuum that "doesn't have power, privilege, and access." In my class on working-class women, we discussed what keeps people from discussing social class. One person from a working-class background said her family did talk about social class. She grew up in a working-class neighborhood where most of her extended family as well as her friends' families were engaged in working-class jobs. These issues, however, were not discussed in mixed class company. Another student from that course talked about struggling with issues that she felt was related to her class background. Her roommate who was of a higher social class, wanted her friend to share her problems. This student felt that her roommate would not really understand her struggles, from previous comments she had made. Still another student who came from a background she described as "poor, poor" feels a strong sense of

disapproval and censure from classmates and professors from college when she speaks honestly of both her present and past experiences of struggle.

A student from an upper-class family whose father had working-class roots talked about her friends' disdain when she began driving a less fashionable automobile. She was surprised when many working-class students in the course challenged her about the cost of the car she mentioned, beyond their own wildest dreams. I had not even heard of the car she mentioned. The pain this student felt in being "dissed" or invalidated was very real. It was a constant challenge in the course to encourage people to share their experiences and challenge their classmates' privilege in ways that did not invalidate the feelings or experiences those students from more privileged backgrounds had. Perhaps one of the main reasons that people rarely have sustained conversations about social class is because we are not positive who is "us" or "them:" the "other."

Class markers and codes words

I am not sure when it dawned on me that we *do* talk about social class all the time. We all *know* this, participants even talked about it but it took a while for me to recognize how significant this was. Transcribing the tapes made it clearer. We use labels in daily conversation to signify social class. These labels are indirect or shorthand. We do acknowledge social class. We "talk" about social class indirectly.

In one groups, food and social class was the topic. This participant remembered learning about social class from the variety of grocery stores in the area. Different social classes shop at different stores. While it is not clear from this comment, my assumption is that the areas where these stores were located were also class-identified, with working-class folks frequenting the inland stores while more affluent people shopped on the beach (ocean side). "Beach side" is shorthand or code for affluence to me.

> *When I was growing up, uhm, you had the grocery stores that were on the beach, and then those that were more inland. And you would see the more upper class retirees going to Publix, etc and then, maybe the lower classes going to different, various other stores. And the quality of the stores and things they promoted in the store . . . all the way to the quality of food that was brought home and put on the table.*

It seems a minor point but it's instructive to note that the store where the "upper class retirees" shop is named while the stores that the lower class frequent are "different, various other stores." "Publix" becomes the center of the conversation, or the dominant focus while the "other stores" are peripheral and unnamed. This may be due to factors including merchandising, this participant's experiences, class-linked patterns of consumption and the larger conversational context. It is unusual that the non-dominant "Other" goes unnamed while the dominant or central focus is named. We are used to that in merchandising: Coke or Kleenex versus the store brand. What are the assumptions we have about the dominant product? Whom do we perceive as the consumers?

One of the "codes" I recognized in this study were adjectives that I perceive as being class-linked. In this particular quote, the *quality* of stores, things, and food were mentioned. Which of the stores is the speaker referring to? Without looking back, what are our assumptions? I began to catalog the various adjectives that seemed to me to be class-linked to the dominant classes. Some of these included: quality, nice, better, right, beautiful or big and examples include: a quality education, nice neighborhood, the right school, beautiful people, better job or big contract. While these may at times describe non-class-based characteristics, they are more often linked to class with an assumption about the resulting "quality." One participant noted this when hearing families described.

> *Maybe this is more having grown up in Latin America but ...I find it so offensive . . . that mythology, I hate that, just the expression, "a better family." That somehow that you are a more valuable human being because of who you are. . . . it is so, uhm, distasteful you know, and it*

> *feeds into that whole thing of it's OK to limit. It's you know, if you're poor and don't have health insurance, then you can die.*

Another participant talked about the symbols of cars when discussing her background. Although she lived in an affluent neighborhood, and her maternal grandparents were "very wealthy," her nuclear family "never had money." This was evident in the Beetle she drove rather than a Mustang like the other teenagers.

> *My grandparents' generation, they were very, very wealthy and they had all the privilege in the world. Uhm, then my, my mother married this foreign architect who didn't care about the money . . . we lived in a very good neighborhood but . . . we never had money. . . . on the one hand, my grandparents had a lot of money, and my mother was raised as a very rich woman, and my father didn't make any money . . . it was like, uhm, . . . the picture of a rich kid but then I wasn't, and I was driving a VW Beetle, whereas all the rich kids were driving Mustangs . . . .*

These code words, class markers or "status symbols" are evident in all aspects of our lives. I noted at least fifteen types of class markers in the focus group conversations including: education, stores, behaviors, language, occupations, achievement, time, transportation, safety/security, values, lifestyle, and material goods most notably food, lodging and clothing. The interesting aspect of these class markers is they are not always universal. They vary from region to region, and according to the status group or social class. "Publix' was used as an example of a more affluent grocery store. This may mean nothing to someone who lives outside the region where the participant grew up. Many international students talked about how disorienting it was to initially come to the U.S. and perceive more of a classless society. Later, they were able to recognize the differences via the class markers. This participant came from India and was confused by the number of people who wore jeans and drove cars.

> *I'm an International student . . . from India. When I first came here it was hard for me to be able to differentiate who belonged to which class. Because outwardly, everybody seemed to be, uhm, I mean in India, if, if*

> *you're somebody's wearing jeans, then they represent a higher class.*
> *Here, everybody is wearing jeans and everybody drives a car . . . But now*
> *. . . I can see the difference in the way they talk and the words they use.*

Another participant from Asia had a similar experience:

> *Social class for me is an abstract thing when it comes to classifying. I*
> *guess, it's hard for me to understand what's associated in people's mind*
> *with coming from a lower class or higher class.*

Some class markers are similar even in countries. This participant who lived in South

Korea identified several cross-cultural, upper middle class markers.

> *In South Korea, we were upper middle class because the company that my*
> *dad worked for would, uhm, provide a company car so he would come and*
> *pick us up and take us to school, private school . . . class was so important*
> *and you could distinguish by the way people dressed, the way they carried*
> *themselves, language they used, education.*

Many would agree that class can often be distinguished by the way people dress, they

way people carry themselves and the language they use. I think this is a little more

slippery in the United States with some class mobility, public education that privileges

"standard" English and non-working class, Euro-centric standards for "appropriate"

classroom education and behavior, the massive manufacturing of clothing and

proliferation of "second hand" stores, television and some cross-class mixing. Even with

class markers as "clues" we're not positive who is in what social class.

A participant who lived in Australia said that class markers were not previously very

apparent but that has gradually changed over the last ten years.

> *You could go to a trailer park and see somebody who came from a*
> *working class neighborhood, a local shop owner and you could have a*
> *business owner, someone who has millions and just by looking at them,*
> *their dress and what they've been driving in you couldn't tell the*
> *difference. [The class markers] weren't as distinct. . . . now the city has*
> *the haves and the have nots, and you see differences in housing, people*
> *driving Mercedes, and BMWs and Jaguars and uhm, shopping . . . dressed*
> *in the peak of European fashion and eating in elegant restaurants.*

Some class markers are well known only within a particular social class. This same participant talked about becoming aware of her own social class standing by not recognizing the class markers for upper class preparatory schools.

> *The privilege and opportunity that came with class was more apparent when I went to college . . . people talked about having gone to Choate and Eaton, and I had no idea what they were so that pretty much put me in my category because at least the middle class people aspired to be going there while the upper class did. That was a rude awakening finding out where you came from, what your roots were. It was disconcerting for me.*

Class markers point to areas and degrees of privilege that are not accessible to those in the working-class. Markers create boundaries for the territories of each class. While there are no actual fences, there are often subtle messages that warn against trespassing. For class outsiders that are privileged enough to trespass, even temporarily, there is often discomfort. Some like this participant finally adjust; for others, there are constant reminders that you do not belong, especially if you do not conform.

Power and privilege

> *The more power, privilege, uhm in a particular ethnic background, places you in a higher social class . . . .*

Privilege is relative. Many of us compare our sense of privilege with those who have more privilege. If we come up short in that comparison, we might assume, that we are not privileged. One of the interesting aspects of ranking and social class is that it is more rare for people to compare their privilege with those who have less. The dominant standard or measurement seems focused on who has the most.

> *I grew up thinking I was a lower class than I really was and it was a false sense of . . . where we were in the world. It wasn't until I got a larger picture that I was able to see how privileged my family really was. If you grow up in the Hamptons, somebody who has a $100,000 a year is poor.*

People may be so isolated, protected and their basic needs sufficiently taken care as children that they do not realize until they are older they are privileged by social class.

> *When I was growing up I didn't realize I was privileged because it seemed like a lot of my friends had more money than my parents. So, I, you know, I think I was comparing it very superficially and it wasn't until I got outside into the world that I realized that I was privileged.*

Having class privilege perpetuates class privilege. Those who have enough money to keep a certain balance in the bank, get banking privileges without fees so monies are used in the service of or for the privilege of the owner rather than paying for the "privilege" of someone else using our money. Having the privilege of money affords people more comfort and service whether in housing, at the theater or in an airplane. It is interesting that we no longer have "best seats" in movie "theaters." At least there is not enforced segregation by class, race, and age. What does that says about the class assumptions about people who go to the movies?

Those who donate more money to the pubic television fundraising drive get a present or other privileges including their name exhibited somewhere if they give enough money, increasing their status. If you have enough money, you can often buy a commodity in bulk, reducing the sale price. Of course, you need discretionary income and discretionary space and/or equipment to store the extra purchase or pay on credit, risking an increase of cost. This next participant addresseed this cycle of privilege.

> *Privilege perpetuates privilege. . . . if you get pulled over for speeding and you have no points on your license already then they won't give you a ticket and therefore you won't get points. And then the next time you get pulled over you won't have points and so I think that privilege perpetuates privilege, and uhh that while you're born into a certain uhm, socio-economic class, you can either maintain that and stay in it or you know, go above it, and the level of choice that you have is determined by your class, your culture, your race, your ethnicity, your gender, and all of the other challenges which would give you access or not access . . . .*

Oppression

As this participant suggested, privilege is not just about social class. Other cultural factors such as race, ethnicity and gender determine the "level of choice" or privilege of access. We are not just talking about economic privilege. Another participant reminded us that skin color can nullify whatever economic privilege one was born into or achieved.

> *I was shaking my head when you were using the example of the points and the pullover 'cause it's like in my experience . . . a lot depends on race but as you gave that example, I thought, well, you know, there have been many instances when, uhm, people of color who may be in a higher social class based on either having been born into it . . . or achieved it, if they were to be pulled over, points or no points, the first thing that . . . is going to determine whether they get a ticket . . . has a lot to do with race . . . .*

Being regarded as white bestows privilege. In the example it probably protects a working-class white (or who "appears" white) from racial oppression, especially from a white-identified police officer who comes from a similar class or ethnic background.

> *Whites were always the upper class; that's how it was, uhm, fed to us in society. I remember segregation and not being able to uh, sit and eat an ice cream cone and be, uhm, in the local drug store in [Southern state] but having to stand there and ask for it, and you know, sort of observing the whites sitting at tables and you know, I mean, this was the way of life .... (Clears her throat) This speaks to that part of it that was internalized as you know, lower class, not being as good as ....*

Privilege, even white privilege, comes with costs and social rules. For whites who do not live up to the expectation of success and behavior and lifestyle characterized by at least middle class white society, there is often an embarrassment to the dominant white classes. The backlash comes in many forms.

> *American society, you know, white is the best, you know, you have lots of privileges being white and that gives you an up to having a higher social class. ... But also the expectation that you should never be low class if you're white, and that's not accepted and then you're white trash. So, kind of the language is kinda like well if you're given all this privilege and you can't succeed with that then you're trash.*

"You've got class!"

> *But one definition of class that I would use, I would say that the Clampetts had a lot more class than the Dreisdales in that TV show.*

One group brought up the sixties television program, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, as an example of poor white country folks who struck oil and ending up having "more class" than their rich, scheming Beverly Hills neighbors. What does having "more class" mean? This participant suggested it does not have to do with money as there have been those from the European noble class who lived in "genteel poverty" who did not have money but they did have "attitude," "values," "education," and "respect for human dignity."

> *We do look at class according to money. there are plenty of people who have money who I would consider low-class folks, uhm, ... I mean I don't think they're very "classy" people. ... you know, there are people who do have enormous class, who have no money. It's about their values, their education ... it's about how they were raised, it's their attitude ..., The noble class in Europe who live in genteel poverty, uhm, they haven't lost class, they've lost money. Uhm, and the same way, I mean, I think, there are incredibly vulgar people who have no education, no style, no nothing but they have lots of money. ...it's not just grace, it's about respect for human dignity and it has to do with education very much. I mean, does somebody change their class...who has lived a very, uhm, a poor life but they, they, you know, take the baby's formula money and they go buy a lottery ticket and suddenly, they are, you know, a millionaire?*

Social classism has been so ingrained in us that we don't recognize how it penetrates every aspect of our lives. While certain life experiences do privilege certain perspectives, allowing the nurturing of certain values, that doesn't mean that the privileged have an ownership of basic human values. A respect for human dignity is a desire in most hearts, although certain life circumstances nurture this desire and others threaten to snuff it out and extinguish its flame. Many people in the most desperate and degrading of human conditions manage to be kind, compassionate, generous and guard the smoldering flame of human dignity in their hearts. Many people in similar circumstances might use the

class oppression they have experienced as a motivation to oppress others less privileged than they. The challenge is to neither internalize nor project oppression on others but rather to work towards social justice.

Most people wish to live life fully, to be at ease in the world, to walk and live and breathe without struggle and stress, conflict and opposition. To put it in classist language is to live "richly" (rather than abundantly). Not all are afforded this privilege. Those who experience fewer struggles indeed may be privileged to live life with ease, and without as much effort. There is a danger of romanticizing and shrouding the struggle of climbing to the top of the heap of materialism and its resulting status. To keep up with those above requires tremendous striving. It also requires exploiting the efforts of those "below" us whose labor subsidizes our upward mobility. Those "below" are in reality ever-present in the back of the mind because to stay on top you have to have someone underneath, someone to look down upon and someone who is going to have to deal with the "lowly" and mundane, and sometimes dangerous and "dirty," details of life.

There is a danger of both dehumanizing those "without" class as well as romanticizing their struggles. Imposed poverty for those who've faced it their entire lives as well as for those who have "fallen" from more privileged classes is disheartening, depressing, exhausting, and life-threatening. Many of those who have had to struggle throughout their lives have developed inner resources in negotiating their difficulties.

Social class is wielded as "a tool of oppression" to keep some people below us and to put ourselves above, according to this next participant. Foucault (1965) said such distinctions or dividing practices are inherently hierarchical. Social class is not only about which worthy *individuals* in the community have more status but also the

consolation prize is seeing which groups have less. It is about the status ranking of

groups, many who already suffer from oppression and a lack of status-value in the larger

society. This participant, identifying mostly as Irish, a historically oppressed group,

shared how the Irish in his neighborhood, used "the tools of the master," (Lorde, 1984),

to oppress others of African and Italian descent.

> In my growing up...class was used as a tool of oppression, uhm,
> identifying mostly as Irish, you looked down upon...people of color, so the
> blacks were a lower class regardless of their profession. You could have a
> doctor that lived right next door to you and they were still considered
> ...lower class than you. It crossed, uhm, skin colors lines, too, because
> you would even say the Italians...were a lower class. It was a means of
> oppression of keeping people below you and kind of putting yourself up....

In spite of their own histories of oppression, the Irish and other immigrant groups have

continued at times to both oppress others, as well as choose not to oppress. All of us

participate in and many are privileged by the class oppression that is so pervasive in our

society. It is hidden and yet not hidden, in our language, in our aspirations, in our

advertising, in our school systems, and other institutions, in our symbols, in our ideas

about work, education and success. This participant comments on the "insidious but

more hidden" qualities of class "subjugation" which have less physical qualities than race

or gender subjugation.

> The language that I prefer to use is subjugation because it seems more
> inclusive in that doesn't preclude race ... but there's something about
> class, I think it's, uhm, just as insidious but more hidden than race and
> gender...which has a much more physical quality to it. The manifestations
> of class, are definitely more subtle; it has this invisible quality ....

Internalized classism

Many aspects of classism are not so hidden. The helicopter that flies over my

working-class neighborhood several times a week during the middle of the night; the

sound of its whirling, chopping blades joined in symphony by the wail of police sirens

which sets off the crescendo wave of barking dogs. The elementary children who dodge cars across a busy street after school without the protection of a school crossing guard or the luxury of stay-at-home parents to see them safely home. The assumptions that many of us have, even working-class folks, about the prevalence of crime, drug abuse and violence: believed to be perpetrated only by "lower class" people, are examples of classism. Problems exist in all neighborhoods, regardless of class; but as this participant suggested, the problems are more visible, less hidden or protected from public view.

> *I think of incarcerated kids or I think of domestic abuse, I automatically think of lower class…. I know that, research wise, domestic abuse occurs, in all classes but the first association is with the lower class. … because it's more public…and it's visible when it is in the lower class because half of them are, you know, … having their fights on the streets so you see it ….*

Although many working-class people are seen as suspects of abuse, stealing and other crimes, it is particularly young, black males that have been targeted, as evidenced by the prison population. The majority of the prison population is working-class but African-Americans are a disproportionate percent (55%) of the incarcerated population although they make up only 12% of the total population (Robinson, 2002).

With class discrimination, including classism interacting with racism and other forms of subjugation, so rampant, it is not surprising that those who have been raised working-class would internalize these messages of oppression, doubt and self-hated of communities, languages, particular perspectives on life and choose to see ourselves in more positive ways than the dominant culture suggests. One of the participants clearly remembered someone from "low income" background that refused to be defined by those negative cultural aspects. In this very act of defiance, however, there appears to me another movement of embracing the dominant, classist perspective.

> *I'm thinking of [someone] ... who said, " I hate the term social class,*
> *because I've always been low income, but I've always had class ....*

Would we so easily miss this double-edged sword if the person had said "I hate the

term race because I've always been black but I've always seemed white."? What we

miss in the preceding statement is that "class" is a code for "upper class behavior." It

carries the assumption that behaviors associated with upper class people is preferable. It

obscures the belief that these types of behavior are more worthy, moral and admirable. It

is this semi-obscured aspect that makes classism and internalized classism so "insidious"

as the previous participant suggested. It is not surprising then when someone who is

working-class aspires to "be like" someone who is more refined or "has class." Who

doesn't want to be more worthy and admired?

Being refined

Classism is rampant in our society. It is difficult to deal with when significant others

have understandably internalized the poison of class discrimination. Such communal

internalization serves and is reinforced by the dominant society. This participant shared

the struggle of living in a family with both "incredible wealth" and "incredible poverty"

and wanting to be someone who "had class."

> *In my family, uhm, there is like incredible wealth and incredible poverty in*
> *the same sibling sub-system. ...my mother...happens to live in a trailer*
> *park while her sister is like, you know, a multi-millionaire. another*
> *brother...you know, was an affluent doctor. So, when we would go to*
> *family gatherings, I would be very aware of our difference within the*
> *family. ...whenever I heard..."She has class or she's refined," I wanted to*
> *be that. And I remember e-envying this side so. There is something about*
> *class...especially if you feel like you are assigned to lower class,... you*
> *want to look and see someone below you. But that's interesting how*
> *within cultures and within even families how class gets assigned ... some*
> *of it's got to do with wealth but it's not all about that.*

This participant brings us back to the idea again that there is something more than the financial about social class. This "class" or being "refined" was seen as being desirable, valued and having status. The issue of class assignment was also pointed out by this participant, and how it has "to do with wealth" but it's also more than that.

This participant discussed how social class often was assigned in African American families according to skin color. Those perceived as having lighter skin were assigned a higher class or status within the family than those with darker skin. This assigned position might be internalized with a corresponding message: those with lighter skin will be successful and deserve the family's resources while those with darker skin are not deserving. These internalized perceptions have consequences on people's choices.

> *perceptions, you know, that was certainly at play in our family because of the skin color ranges...who was seen as refined, uhm. ...My grandmother was, uhm, a darker one, and the brothers, though dark...as long as they married a light skinned woman, that elevated their status so that is about who's who within the family. ... assigning certain class positions also limits people's choices, you know, as they internalize it. ...Because as I look in my own family...the lighter skin ones, there was this sense that you should achieve and excel and for the darker, you know, there was this message somehow that you don't deserve very much and it seems that the lighter ones, you know, would go out and build because whenever there was anything to be distributed in the family, they were the ones who got it.*

Social class has both hidden, insidious aspects as well as very visible aspects. We all talk about social class every day in indirect, coded language using class markers that indicate to what social position we believe the person, transportation, education, occupation, etc. pertains. We use language that reinforces classism usually without awareness of how it reinforces class distinctions, assigns class positions with corresponding messages of greater or lesser worth. We all internalize these messages. Those who are more privileged begin to see themselves as having greater value, able to be confident and more successful. Those who feel "less than" internalize those messages

as well. Desiring to be regarded as worthy and valued, we long for and attempt to mimic behavior that is more "classy" or "refined."

This process of internalizing classism is not merely imposed "from above" by those with more privilege. It is ingested by individuals and is reinforced in our families and communities in a parallel process of duplicating the classist structures of inequality, even to distributing precious family and communal resources according to the ranking of who is more important and deserving. Class discrimination is only one form of subjugation. Systems of domination are also manifested in sexual orientation, health/ability, age, gender, spirituality/religion and race. As participants shared, when classism interacts with other forms of subjugation such as race, there are multiple impacts of oppression.

Social Class Identity

> *I see class as shifting ... depending on who I'm with, ... my own class relations shifts, so, I'm usually in a range of relationships so I wondering how I look at myself in relationship to others or how they perceive me in the relationship. So, it's not quite as fixed ....*

Social class shifts, according to this last participant, depending on the relationship. It depends on the relationship to significant people in our lives–family, lovers, friends, and colleagues. Social class depends on our relationship to other social classes. Social class depends on our relationship to other subjugated and privileged groups. Social class in addition to being an economic indicator has a has a social component that determines our rank, status or social position in the community. Social position may shift depending on circumstances that make us more or less mobile

Relational to Significant People

> *I remember asking my mother ...what are we? ...she said, you know, probably lower middle class. When I look at it now I would probably say we were more working-class ....*

Growing up I was poor, I mean working class, I guess, uhm, but, we didn't really talk about it, I mean we were middle class, that's the way we talked about it, uhm, but looking back on it ...I think it's not so much about money but sort of a state of mind ....

Family of origin

When I asked how participants would define their social class identity, most began their answer by identifying their present class identity and then immediately switching to how they "grew up." Family of origin or class of origin is a significant experience in assessing one's social class identity.

I definitely know what my social class is because it's from my family of origin; this is my social class. I define myself...from borrowed sense....

In addition to how they grew up, many people shared stories about how their own parents grew up as well. Intergenerational class stories provided the framework for many people's social class experiences. Participants shared their family social class stories, telling them with poignancy, humor and compassion. This participant began her story with her "probably middle class" position, described each of her parents' "very poor" farm backgrounds, and her parents managing to become "upper middle class" and then contrasted the different generations' experiences, including her own downward mobility.

Both my parents grew up very poor on farms. My father's background was German ...during the first World War not only dirt poor but ostracized from the community 'cause of their German-ness. ...my mother's family, again, very poor, uhm, and both my mom and dad ...left the farm but they both managed to, between the two of them, really move themselves up to probably, upper middle class. ...Dad eventually ended up with lots of money invested in the market, you know, ... he did not want to be poor...he saw what had happened to his dad and it was just bad. There was a real difference in social class between my parents' family and their family and now I'm headed down again...my sister is headed in the other direction. She and her husband have amassed a fortune. Uhm, they're going to have to take care of me in my old age (laughs).

How one's social class identity is described is usually in relationship to the significant people in our lives, starting with our family's "class of origin." Class of origin is a very pivotal in our experience of social class and siblings often continue to be very aware in their differences of social class from both their class of origin and each other. Depending on the family culture, those who have a higher social class may be expected to help out less privileged family members. Sometimes those who are less privileged are expected to work for or in other ways contribute to the privileged family's household. In other families, family members live together in order to survive, especially parents with their adult children or vis versa. In the citation above, it is significant how her father's German ethnicity during World War I may have contributed to her grandparents' experience of social class because they were ostracized in their community, a common experience of ethnic Americans and immigrants when the U.S. is at war against the home country as Arab Americans and Muslims have experienced. This suggests the communal, historical, political and oppressive relationship of social class.

Immigration and blue-collar life was an essential part of the following participant's social class identity. Despite what he made, and where he lived, that still molded his social class identity. He described a "fall of class," shifting his parents' social class. He mentioned earlier the Holocaust as having a significant impact on his family's sense of class illustrating yet another example of oppression and history impacting social class.

> *My identity is this blue-collar, working-class, immigrant family. ...it's a "fall of class" kind of a family. ...I'm not going to live that, I mean, in terms of what I make, or where I live. It was blue-collar at least within my family. They had pride in that but...it was a shifting for them, not fixed ....*

This next participant focused most of her story on the experience of hard work in her extended family, mentioning life as migrant farmers, her grandmother picking cotton,

working in a textile mill and making enough to "get by" with her uncle. Concerns about a

cross-class marriage between her parents were also raised.

> *my mother's family were, uhm, migrant farmers. They rode around from*
> *farm to farm with thirteen kids in the back of a wagon. My dad's family*
> *…lower middle class. His family did not want him to marry my mother*
> *but he did. …I was very, very close to my grandmother and her brother.*
> *She worked in a textile mill for most of her life after she quit picking*
> *cotton. She worked so hard all her life. She learned how to get by.*

The next participant began with his own "very poor" childhood, post World War II in

Europe, similar to his dad's "poor farm family" background. By adolescence, this

participant felt "pretty privileged" having a car and being able to go to college. He also

contrasted his dad's background with his mother's middle class one and pointed out how

important it was for his dad to move to the city and that his mom could work at home

raising the children, signifying that "we're not poor farmers anymore."

> *I grew up … very poor. … By the time … I was an adolescent, we had*
> *moved up socially. I had a car when I was 18. …I felt pretty privileged.*
> *…my dad was from, a pretty poor farm family and…lost the farm due to*
> *the war. My mom was from a middle class family …[and] worked at home*
> *with the kids…. For my dad that was…we're not poor farmers any more*

Focusing on her own family of origin rather than her parents' background, this

participant's folks, especially her mother, were a central memory in the experience of

being poor. This participant remembered casseroles, a hallway bedroom, camping

vacations and being told she could not go to college.

> *I come from a lower middle class family. I knew we were poor. There*
> *were things that happened to me that didn't happen to other people I*
> *knew. Like my folks told me I couldn't go to the college that I wanted to*
> *because they couldn't afford it. There's five kids in my family…my mom*
> *doing all different antics … casseroles…I slept in the hallway upstairs…*
> *we camped for vacations….*

Comparing his upper middle class life with his middle class background, this participant reflected that his quality of life, including his job and degree of indebtedness, is better than his parents.

> *I would characterize myself as upper middle class and grew up, uhm, middle class. And from the past, there has been change by all indices, you know, doing better than my parents on a professor's salary and job qualities and quality of life, and degrees of indebtedness, all those things.*

In contrast, this participant recognized her privilege in regard to having an education and access to student loans. Although she imagined she still would be "considered middle class" like her parents, in terms of income, she felt in poverty.

> *I would probably be considered middle class...based on education, ...but in terms of income, I'm at the poverty level. My family, on the other hand, is supposedly considered middle class.... I don't have the money that reflects that yet.... ... But I do have access to student loans and things like that which separate me from anybody else who doesn't have the privileges of being in an institution of higher learning (thoughtfully, quietly).*

Multiple classes of origin

Within many families, there is more than one family of origin's social class experience. In the United States, one of the impacts of social mobility is the interaction and exposure of children to others of different experiences, although affluence can provide "protection" from such exposure. This may result in cross-class coupling contrary to the concerns of some family members as one participant related. In families with children, each parent may come from different social strata, resulting in multiple messages or lenses within the family about social class. This is often more apparent when death or divorce causes a split between families of origin. Many participants in this research as well as in my social class course describe the experience when divorce creates a situation when the children experience a significant decrease in the material comfort of their lifestyle. In heterosexual couples, it is usually the woman who is most financially

impacted. Many female-headed families are plunged into poverty as a result of divorce, a very traumatic and stressful experience for all involved. One participant described she and her family's experience in terms of social class:

> *While growing up, my parents divorced which threw us down the scale. I had to live in a, uhm, low-income housing type thing...all kinds of people all times through the night walking around outside and it was just scary for me. The decrease in social status though I was little, I definitely felt it.*

For children whose fathers and/or extended families stay involved with them, there can be a distinct difference in the social class experiences on each side of the family. This participant did not have a doubt that he would never have gone on to college and earned a degree if he had stayed with his mother. The siblings who did live with her did not go on and/or finish college while his siblings with his father did.

> *If I had stayed in my mother's household, I have very few doubts in my mind that I would not have gone to college. I would end up like my younger siblings who toyed with college; everybody got married and worked regular jobs whereas the other siblings are all college educated, professionals, very well off. There are class differences in families.*

Even within two-parent families, children can experience different social class experiences. In my own family of nine children, we younger children experienced more of a working-class experience than did my older siblings who enjoyed the supplemental financial support my maternal grandfather gave to our family until his death. Several participants shared how important family was to buffer the effects of hard times. They helped family members during rough times and family helped them. Several students in my working-class studies course decided to drop out of school after the tragedy of September 11th caused them to re-evaluate their priorities. They wanted to be physically closer to their families and one talked about wanting to be more available to a single mother who was having a hard time financially. Other historical events such as war or

depression can wreck havoc with or enrich family finances, plunging one family into debt or ensuring another family's future. Individual family events such as sickness, death, and unemployment can also have a significant impact on families.

One participant in the research shared how the effect of unemployment was minimized by her extended family's support.

> My father, uhm, was laid off. My mom had to go to work and we were really tight on money, had to get food stamps, to the society around us ...we're low class. We don't have money. ...because of my family's values of taking care of each other and the power of prayer to get through things ...family around us that s-stepped in, took care of us, financially and ... mental support and spiritual support, ... eventually my father did get his job. They kinda kept us in that middle class ....

This participant emphasized it was her extended family's spiritual beliefs of helping one another during hard times that sustained her own nuclear family.

Several participants discussed how their own economic and social position changed as their parents financially succeeded. One participant told about the experience of her own parents "making it" and feeling "the chain of the classes" Another shared what it was like to *be* the poorer relatives, an experience I felt as a child with my family of origin and still feel in my extended family.

> When I was younger, my family...worked up from extremely poor to middle class by getting an education, going to college while I was in grade school and...to the point where they were in the upper, upper class by the time I was in college. So, it kind of like...the chain...of the classes....

Another participant told a similar story of growing up. She described how it felt to have relatives on each side of the family who had very different social classes. She initially lived at her grandparent's home, surrounded by her father's extended family of eleven siblings. She remembered being "dirt poor," sharing a taco at Taco Bell among three children, the extended family bringing together rice and beans and soup to feed

everyone. Her parents moved out of state and "made a life for themselves." Her nuclear

family had all gone to college and were a "higher class" than her dad's relatives. Her

mother's relatives had Ph.D.'s and were a higher social class than her nuclear family.

> *When I visit my mom's side of the family I try and play up my Ph.D. … But when I …see my other family it's…I'm just in school. You try and play it down because I don't want my elders who are higher than me in the hierarchy to feel bad because, you know, they're just scraping it together …and I'm spending my grandparent's money getting my Ph.D. …It's hard for me to know how to relate to each set. I, I put on a different face….*

Intimate relationships

> my *income is poverty wages. My husband's income is upper-middle class wages. You know, if he didn't have a job, we wouldn't have money …which is a very different position being part of what is traditionally the dominant class which is that you control the means of production….*

Many people's, especially women's, social class position is dependent on the income of

the person with whom they are intimately involved, especially if strictly based on wages

rather than investments and inheritance. As the participant above suggested, her social

class position was dependent on her husband upper-middle class income as her own

income was "poverty wages."

This next participant described her own "fall from grace" after divorce to a

"successful" man when she lived a life with "everything she wanted": a big house,

minivan, help around the house and children going to good schools. This class change

had been especially difficult for her daughter who is struggling with the "shame" of

school lunches. While this participant lived "below the poverty level," she realized she

could always depend on her family for financial support.

> *This man I married became very successful. … we had a big house…a minivan and…people helping me, uhm, around the house and the kids were going to very good schools …. But, but, (laughs) I got a divorce, uhm, and now I have to deal with child support which, it's not enough … because my kids get free meals at school (laughs) and…my daughter says*

> ..."This is so shameful I'm going to get free lunches." ...uhm, so, now I am
> below poverty level...but on the other hand, I know that I have some social
> security because if I ever get into problems with money, my family will
> support me. ...I am poor but I'm not poor ....

As a child, this next participant experienced a class change after her parents divorced and she got free school lunches living with her mother. Currently in a "extraordinarily tight" situation, she described how she feared she might be "plunged" back into the "lower class" if her intimate relationship ended.

> My class has changed ... when I was very young and my parents were both
> working, we were middle class. When my parents divorced, ...I got free
> lunch and breakfast at school and government checks, and we were lower
> class .... Things recovered for my family ... and we got ourselves to middle
> middle class again. But it's unclear where I should situate myself now
> because, uhm, I have education, uhm, I'm owning, barely, the house that I
> live in, but things are extraordinarily tight, uhm ... if that relationship
> were to end tomorrow, I would be plunged ...back into the lower class
> definition. It all seems very tenuous to me.

Another participant described the privileged class change he had experienced when both he and his partner worked full time rather than being in graduate school. Before he did not make enough money to save; now they both make more than they can spend.

> now that we are both work full time, look what we've got. We have more
> money than we can spend ...I feel, I feel incredibly privileged, now yeah,
> we've moved up. ...if middle class means you have enough to live on,
> uhm, but can put some aside and upper middle means that you make even
> more,...I'm kind of more like upper middle class now....

This participant described how she and her partner were "lower middle" while living in an environment of "upper middle" friends. She did not understand how they got "that way" but said "we're very comfortable."

> for me to be at this point in my life, lower middle, but be in an
> environment of upper middle ... we have a nice house but walk in and
> there is nothing in it. We live in a nice neighborhood ... all our friends go
> on all these vacations and we don't and I don't even know why/how we
> made it. ... I don't even understand why we are where we are or how we
> got that way, but I mean we're very comfortable.

Children

Children are another significant relationship that influences people's social class. This participant poignantly shared her own sense of letting her children down by not providing the same opportunities that her parents provided for her. Initially identifying as middle class, when I asked her if she had always been middle class, she replied:

> *Growing up I was probably upper middle class …(clears throat). I mean it's painful enough to make me red. I mean, it's not easy, I find it difficult to talk about. I guess I'm red because I feel it's my own doing. (Long pause)…I'm probably going to cry, because I guess I feel that I made philosophical, uhm, value-laden choices that, uhm, (pause) really compromised my family …I don't think I would have done anything differently, but I most certainly lose sleep over it. …I feel like I've put them I them at risk and I'm sure everyone else thinks I have (sighs).*

Another participant worried her income might not provide sufficiently for her children.

> *I, I consider myself as upper middle class. Uhm, and yet, I continue to struggle because I don't want to on academic pay, uhm, not be able to, uhm, give to my children what they are due.*

One of the most difficult struggles is not being able to provide for, protect and gift those we cherish. It is also the feeling of helplessness to know that you do not have "the means" to help them to make a different life for themselves. "The means" are often very class-determined as well as influenced by dominant culture.

Almost everyone makes career and life choices that have profound social class implications for themselves and possibly other family members. Often the undesired consequences of making these "value-laden choices" causes a person to have to choose between these important values and those most highly regarded by the dominant culture: values of financial success, security and comfort. This choosing counter-cultural values can be risky, exhausting and stressful for one's physical and sometimes one's emotional

well-being. It is oftentimes most strongly criticized by those who love and are concerned about us, especially if we have minor children.

There are higher risks to health, relationships and personal happiness by choosing comfort, success and security over one's cherished values. In order to have increased security and approval from society and our families, many feel forced into making choices that might contribute to their unhappiness.

Loyalty to values and class legacy

Social class is often "carried" forward into at least the next generation. Children learn the meaning of class, assumptions, and values from their own parents' struggles. Many people from working-class backgrounds as well as their children and even grandchildren speak about their family loyalty, honoring the legacy of the struggle of family members who worked hard to help their family survive. For some, blue-collar was an identity to be proud of. Others were loyal to the family values that emerged rather than to the social class. Loyalty to the family values of the previous generation was tearfully expressed by this participant in her commitment not to "betray the values" as she considered her resources when making purchases.

> *My mother's family, we're all dirt farmers. What did my grandparents do, and what do other people do? ...I think about it [when about to make a purchase], do I have the resources? Because I don't want to ...betray the values that came from this family. (Long pause, then tears.)*

Several participants told stories of forebears who were middle or upper class who chose to follow paths of service or justice that might conflict with own class position or interests. These family members made a lasting impression on some participants' values and commitment to social justice.

> *My great- grandmother and ... also her parents had a very strong sense of social obligation and commitment to social justice, as did my grandfather, even though it challenged his own class interests ....*

A childhood friend's changing values prompted this next participant to clarify that his commitment was loyalty to his parents values, but not to his class *per se* as there were some aspects of his class of origin that he found "appalling."

> *A friend of mine... is the president of a bank. He's got the country club membership, the huge house, his daughter just graduated from Cornell, he's got the whole nine yards. I look at the way he's changed...his values have changed. And, so, when I think about my own social class...I'm not sure I want to go forwards or backwards. ...My father used to go, "It's nice to be important but more important to be nice." ...I don't want to be important. I'd rather be lower class and nice. But there are things that I grew up with that are just, you know, appalling to me...there's not a sense of loyalty to class. There's a sense of loyalty to values....*

This last participant was "still trying to negotiate" her own sense of class identity. On the one hand, she was pushing the family boundary by getting her Ph.D. On the other hand, she didn't want to "Psst" cut off her "very lower class" family roots to which she was emotionally connected.

> *I come from a very lower class. My dad got a bachelor's degree but he does very, very well and could actually be considered upper class, but my mom got her GED and all my relatives, they're either farmers, or they're mechanics or they work at the factory. There is no one in my family that has a master's degree so I'm trying to push that boundary and...get my Ph.D. And what's hard for me is that there's, it's like I'm connected emotionally to all of that and I have like two choices: I can either cut it off, say "Pssst." (Scissor motion). OK, I'm going to be over here 'cause I'm . . . But I don't want to do that so I'm trying to negotiate this.*

This participant felt she had to make a choice between those two aspects of herself. Many working-class people have been pressured to make that choice, especially after getting a degree. This next participant who earned her Ph.D. and identified herself and her family background as working-class, had strong feelings about this pressure.

> *It can be a very sensitive spot for me when people define class related to job, or to degree attainment. ...that's where I get real feisty about it.*

Many working-class people who have degrees and/or are in certain occupations refuse to be forced to choose between their new life and their roots. Several anthologies have been written, for example, about academics and other cultural workers who have struggled to negotiate these at least bi-cultural social class identities including *This fine place so far from home* (Dews & Law, 1995), *Imposters in the sacred grove* (Long, Jenkins, & Bracken, 2000), *Laborers in the knowledge factory* (Tokarczyk & Fay, 1993) and *Liberating memory* (Zandy, 1995a). Like participants in this study, not all have made the same choices. Some decided that they are no longer working-class but they will always be in solidarity with their working-class background. Some continued to identify themselves as working-class. Others realized that they have a unique position straddling the boundaries between two social class identities, seeing as one author put it "awkwardly in both directions." Some felt very "awkward" and not quite at home in this bi-cultural position. Others found kindred spirits and embraced their multi-identity social class position. These authors recognized the importance of their working-class experiences and consciousness on their present work. Others from working-class roots were still trying to negotiate an identity or a sense of place where they feel at home.

For myself, I will always be working-class; it is in my heart. At the same time, even as I make conscious choices about income, lifestyle, neighborhood, I realize I am a "border-crosser." I have the privilege to inhabit more than one space and identity at the same time. This sense of multiple identities is one I feel fairly comfortable with most of the time. I have been working-class long enough and lived among enough working-class folks that I know we are all "border-crossers" in some way or another. I have on occasion

felt "different" from working-class neighbors or acquaintances. I never have felt, though, that I did not belong. I have suddenly felt this many times in middle class, upper middle class and more affluent social situations.

We could be all living in multiple identities, as this next participant suggested.

> *My own identities or...social class, historically growing up it was more multi-layered. You know, the working-class, poor, blue-collar, white collar, I mean, there were all sorts of strata. Uhm, but I think over time, ...I've lost a lot of the middle. I identify and have an identity or a certain sense of class ...uhm, maybe different than ...if you looked at income or looked at, you know, how I think versus how I live. When you start talking about identity, uhm, you could be living in multiple identities.*

The challenge, however, is to struggle with our lifestyle's influence on how we think.

As Audre Lorde (1995) eloquently put it, we are all living in multiple identities. While we are being pressured to "pluck out" one aspect of that identity to present to represent as the whole, it is through all these different parts that we have the most power.

> I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self. But this is a destructive and fragmenting way to live. My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, allowing power from particular sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all my different selves, without the restrictions of externally imposed definition. Only then can I bring myself and my energies as a whole to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living. (p.288)

Social Position, Status and Subaltern Groups

> *class is kind of a social construction that defines rank.... there's a classism in gender and class in terms of, uhm, sexual orientation and ... who's the upper class and who's the lower class, who's the have and have nots, ... all based on rank. It's all about whose higher or lower, you know, that people experience ...based on ...their culture. Part of my family that's been through the Holocaust, you know, that it was the lowest of lower class based on ethnicity, ... uhm, they went from ...a relatively decent living to being the lowest class of all.*

Social class is a socially constructed socio-economic ranking system. It is not the only ranking system in our society as this previous participant suggested. Social class actively interacts with other ranking systems such as race, gender, age and sexual orientation to name. One's social class is enhanced by or negatively impacted by membership in these other ranking systems.

Many participants pointed out that social class is "more than" money and gave examples of how status and value are part of our social construction and ranking of class.

> *class is an "up," a better... I immediately think of upper class and I didn't come up in the upper class. That's the class I think of first. The lower class is thought of last. The words ...have the up and down piece to it.*

We do not have as rigid a caste system is this country as in India. I wonder, however, if we were to take these ideas about social class in India and if we substituted "a redneck" for "from a lower caste" and "who's a Carnegie" for "from a higher caste" how different would our social class system be?

> *there's very much a race or caste issue, too. ... a rich person who's from a lower caste will still be looked down upon more than a poor person from a higher caste. ...in the urban places, it's kind of equalized, but not totally. If you still look at these elite groups...it's dominated by a...certain caste.*

For me, this exposes how much status is part of our social class system. It is all about money and it is more than just money.

Social class is reinforced by one's social status and membership in other status groups. These social groupings are usually not across opposite social classes, i.e. there are not many working-class people at the country club except as wage laborers. Access to Ivy League colleges to persons from "the lower classes" are purposely limited by cost, biased entrance exams, and other status associations. Even the few token persons who are admitted are excluded from significant inner societies, social and recreational events.

People from adjacent social classes, especially if they are on either end of the particular class group, may be in the same status group. Thus, there are "higher economic level" working-class in some middle class social groups and even religious groups. Friendships groups, however, are usually within the same class although they may also be within the same occupational group. Occasionally, different adjacent classes may be in the same occupation, especially if education, military service that has resulted either in further education and/or marketable skills training allows one to compete.

It seems that one participant felt that individuals with money have sufficient status to give them the power to "decide where [they] fit" in spite of their social class, depending how they presented themselves to society.

> *There kind's of a blurring because you can consider yourself of a mid to lower social class but have a lot of money and vice-versa depending on where you place your priorities or how you choose to present yourself in society, you can sort of play with i ...and decide where you fit.*

Perhaps there are rare individuals who are white, males originally from the North of Protestant, English descent with acceptable accents, brilliant minds, beautiful bodies and teeth and a ivy league education who also have significant money and connections (married to a woman who has status helps) that can decide to a degree where they want to fit in affluent society. I don't think most of us have that much power. This next participant described these social constructs as "characteristics" which determines the range that people can "attain a certain social class status."

> *I almost visualize it as certain characteristics a person possesses give them a...range in which they can, uhm, attain a certain social class status. Like everyone has a certain base line based on these characteristics and they can reach a certain point based on the characteristics. ...gender, race, culture, uhm, the social class you're born into, all kinda determine.*

While I would not use the word "characteristic" because it often conveys the idea that this is inherent in the person's personality, I would agree that it often based on people's perceived appearance.

> *I'm not sure that you can even talk about social class without talking about its intersection with race and gender. .....Uhm, it's much too simplistic. ... Actually, there's many more categories because if you throw sexual orientation into it, then in fact, it's even more complicated, but uhm, there's no question that still women don't have economic resources.*

Social constructs such as sexual orientation, gender, race and ability do have an interacting effect on social class. Participant in these next sections discussed how they saw these "dividing" and ranking practices influence their understanding of social class, status and social position.

Race

> *People assume if you're not white, if you're black, Hispanic, Asian, you belong more to the lower class than the white- dominated culture or race.*

> *Whites were always the upper class, that's how it was ...fed to us in society. ... I mean, I remember segregation.*

The population of the "lower" class in the U.S. is predominately white.

Social class is modulated by socio-cultural issues. African American participants shared a similar view that *economic* class is de-emphasized in each of their various local communities. This was echoed in my course on working-class women. Examples were given how status was accorded by community involvement, leadership within various local black communities (churches, schools, clubs, etc), education, connection with a high status or "good family" and skin color. Participants shared the impact of racism that gives African Americans a lower social class standing in U.S. society as a whole, especially compared to whites.

Several participants mentioned the history of exploitation of blacks, particularly through slavery, to line the pockets of the privileged. This participant pointed out this oppression, including seeing Africans as being less than, and then turning around to blame African-Americans when they were not part of society "in the way we are."

> This country was built...on the whole, you know, premise of race and social class.... People of color were less than, uhm we took away their power, we took away all their resources , including their spiritual connections, cultural connections, uhm, and their value systems because, you know, they were trash, they weren't human, they were less than, uhm, ... exploited for the whole purpose of economic development and gains. And when you had the money, you had the power, you had the position. ...blame the people of color for now not being a part...of the society in the way that we are. ...the whole country is built on...race and class division.

Because of segregation, social class in the black community was not defined by economics, according to two different quotes from this next participant, but by other signs of status including skin color, education, hierarchy in the church and the community's perception of your family.

> There was this aura about a family that placed that family in the upper social class status for the black community. ...Class was not defined by uhm, economics. Because of racial discrimination, most black people lived in the same community whether you were, you know, a teacher or a laborer. ...class had to do with skin color, you know, it might be who was lighter...there was a combination of perhaps of skin color and, uhm, education...that really put you into the upper class or you know, demoted you somewhat. If you were, uhm, workers in the church, deacons, trustees ...you were part of the, you know, higher class in the black community. I never thought of class as money, uhm, growing up. That wasn't how it was defined. ...occupation ...would play some role. You could be a teacher but your status may not be higher than a lighter skin person who, the perception of that family as a good family.

Many white participants acknowledged white privilege and how we have benefited from racism on a daily basis. As a whole, however, white America still does not acknowledge our privilege as one participant pointed out. Many people strongly believe in "bootstrapping" that everyone has equal opportunity if we just worked hard enough.

> *Some of the undergraduates here are...really, incredibly poor ... from poor, farming families. ...they may have some privilege because they're white. ...if you talk about, uhm,...social class or race and lack of access to power, they don't get it. They believe very strongly from their Christian heritage that everyone can pull themselves up by their bootstraps, that everyone has equal opportunity. There's no excuse for anyone not to actually be successful.*

Racism and classism effect us all, but not equally. The very white privilege that benefits these undergraduates also comes with a cost. If you don't recognize the racism that is obvious and rampant in this country, how can you possibly recognize classism? That is the "devil's bargain" that whites are asked to participate in. Why are so many small farmers, white as well as people of color, still struggling when the food industry continues to make profits? Whites often do not acknowledge the blatant exploitation of African Americans, not only during slavery, but during Reconstruction, during Jim Crow, during the Civil Rights era up through today. Whites do not "notice" the black workers that continue to clean up after many of us, cook our food, type our letters although the white or Chicana or Filipino workers are often invisible as well. Bi-nary racism–seeing skin color difference as either black or white, rather than along a continuum, keeps many peoples of color invisible. It protects some "whites" from being seen as "people of color." It fragments groups who might form coalitions of solidarity and resistance.

This participant pointed out that other groups have started out at the "bottom of the ladder" in other words, we have exploited them also. Many groups were able to escape as they learned the language or changed their clothing. Those who were perceived as having different skin color were not as lucky.

> *look at race but you also look at some of the cultural groups attached to that or the ethnic groups, because uhm, historically in the country I think that when new populations came in who couldn't speak the language, they always started out at the bottom of the ladder ... when they were perceived as different ... the most blatant difference is skin color and appearance ....*

Racism based on skin color continues to be an issue, even when African Americans and other people of color have "climbed the *economic* ladder." This participant pointed out that race was the difference in equality between these two millionaires.

> ... *classism is a real complex issue, uhm, ..., you know, Bill Cosby's a millionaire, and Donald Trump's a millionaire, and yet, they ain't equal, I mean, there's a way in which Trump has access that, you know, Bill Cosby will never have and it's about race ...*

What is Bill Cosby's *social* class? This next participant suggested there is a difference between economic class and social class. She pointed out while more opportunities would open up because of increased income, the opportunities that might be available to Colin Powell because of economic position might not get him invitations to the highest social class's table.

> *Because of your abilities, you have the opportunity to earn more money, but you still would not necessarily be ... in the highest social class. ... you might not necessarily be, you know, invited to sit at Martha Stewart's table so that's the difference between social and economic class .... As your income increases, definitely more, uhm. opportunities are going to be opened up for you. But, still socially, I mean, Colin Powell ...there's still gonna be some people in that highest social class bracket that are not going to invite him to sit down at his table.*

(This was recorded before Powell became Secretary of State, which would give him additional role status on top of his military history and economic position. Would his son be as desirable a marriage partner for an affluent white family's daughter? This is of course also ignoring his bi-racial heritage as we have historically done in this country).

Race and social class in white society were made clear as this next participant pointed out in the quote at the beginning of this section. Whites were on top, blacks on bottom and segregation kept them apart socially. This provided a dual class society except when it was at the convenience of whites. While segregation is legally over, it still is socially and therefore, economically operative.

Sex/gender

> *If I'm thinking about India, I would say gender does play a role because I think class is more the class of our parents, our fathers and brothers and husbands, rather than our own. Yes, it's much more the male than the female. As a female, our system of dowries and things like that you bring in money into the family you marry into, but still it really adds prestige and class to your husband and not to you. You're still reflected in class.*

Women and social class has been a much debated though little studied area (Abbott & Sapsford, 1987). It has been traditionally assumed that women's social class was derived first from her father and then from her husband, depending on the legal system of inheritance, i.e. whether she maintained property independently from a male spouse, whether she traditionally inherited property from her family of origin, etc. Most social class studies focus on occupations, especially in the United States. Beyond the question of whether occupation is an adequate definition of social class, because so many women were in unpaid domestic labor, worked part-time, changed work situations, had large gaps in their employment and were not highly represented in professional fields, occupational studies did little to reflect the influence of women on social class.

This next participant pointed out the influence of women's socialization in relationships on social class.

> *Women are much more socialized to deal with relationships than men are. ... when you are looking at things like class...or privilege, you're looking at how do I have more than she has and that's a relationship. ...*

Many women take an active responsibility in their relationships. In addition to women being relationship-aware in regards to their intimate relationships, many women who have children also make the parent-child relationship a priority. In heterosexual relationships, many women take primary responsibility for caring for a couples' children. This accounts for many of the "employment gaps" in women's lives.

This participant alluded to this care-giving role interaction of class and gender when both heterosexual partners are employed. It sounded like the husband made more money. It is unclear to what degree that might be influenced by gender. Being considered the primary breadwinner may mean the family has prioritized that person's career. In private practice this could mean a longer time to create a reputation and a client base. Others factors may come into play, however. Losing work time in private practice means not being paid for those hours as well as the potential of losing clients.

> *Terms such as gender, race as primary categories and all the seats of class are so embedded in all these other things ... it is so intertwined ... thinking about the decisions that my husband and I make, he's in private practice, we have to uhm, a kid get's sick, we'll, he's not going to make the money so, I mean, many of the decisions we make are based on class.*

Other traditionally gendered care-giving functions, especially in heterosexual relationships, that contribute to these "employment gaps" include caring for infirm elderly parents and other relatives, following husbands' career moves which often have impact on wives' career "mobility," and young wives working at what ever employment is available to "put the husband through school." Because of gender socialization, many men define themselves more through their work and women through their children. In my family experience, while there are tremendous employment consequences for women who take this care-giving role seriously, there may even be greater employment consequences for men who have more traditional employers.

This participant pointed out the "disadvantages" that "handicap" those who are considered to be "the minority" and she mentioned ability, race, sexual orientation, age and gender. I think she meant this in terms of "minority status" because she was discussing this *vis a vis* the dominant knowledge. This could be, however, a problematic term because women and the working-class are the non-dominant group yet, they are not

numerically the smaller group in categories of domination such as sex and social class.

She raised an additional issue in terms of the interaction of gender, social class and age

because of many women's role as the primary child-caregiver. Because this often means

absence from the labor market, this has important implications for a woman's retirement

and elder years. This increases men's advantages and privilege, echoing the earlier idea

that "privilege begets privilege."

> *age and gender I know that with men receiving higher uhm pay, salaries,*
> *and with women you know taking the time off traditionally to raise the kids*
> *then their pension is less, and their retirement is less, so when men retire*
> *they have more money to retire with, which would maybe place them in a*
> *higher, you know so they have more advantage or privilege than a woman.*

Women's participation in the paid labor force has increased dramatically in the last

several decades, although their work is still "clustered in traditionally 'female'

occupations" (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000, p. 54). Social class studies exploring this are

scarce. As this participant pointed out, even when a man and a woman are in similar

fields, gender plays a role in deciding the specific position and the pay.

> *It took my father a lot less time and a lot less effort to become upper class*
> *than my mom. ...she even said, ... "It would have taken me twenty-five*
> *years making what your father made with two years out in the field." And,*
> *I mean, they are in similar fields but a little bit different positions, uhm,*
> *...definitely ... there's a gender issue ...with social class.*

Abbott and Sapsford (1987) challenged the view that women only reflect the social

class of the males in their lives in Britain and the United States. They suggested that

women's social class is also often derived from her own life experience including

education and occupation. In addition, their social class contributed and sometimes

defined the social class of the household, even in heterosexual marriages.

> *What about a woman, in a heterosexual relationship, who gains in social*
> *class ...? ... my best friend now has higher social class and ... the ways*

> *in which then she has to be "less than" because of that. How does she*
> *compromise other ways in which she could have power?*

Working-class feminist academics such as Janet Zandy (1995b) in the United States

and Pat Mahony and Christine Zhriczek (1997) in Britain challenged that occupation-

based or studies of the perceived "objective" social class of people inadequately reflect

people's "subjective" social class identity, i.e., the identity they embrace. These feminist

authors would agree with the next participant that sex and gender do influence

occupational access, i.e., sex/gender discrimination is still operative.

> *Being male in a society. . .leads to you being able to either get a better*
> *paying job or ...the same job as someone but you're going to be better*
> *paid at it...which would economically place you in a higher social class.*

They would not necessarily agree that a better paying job automatically increases

one's social class. This is supported by many participants who suggested that social class

goes "beyond the financial." Reflecting on this study, my own life experiences and a

growing number of especially, working-class authors, this becomes more apparent.

Many women who are either themselves at least upper middle class or are in

heterosexual relationships with men who are at least upper middle class work outside the

home in volunteer roles or in low-paying jobs because they don't "need the money."

Reflecting on his own upper middle class background, this participant shared the

experience of his mother going back to work when he was in high school, suggesting to

me that as her care-giving was less needed at home, she was freer to invest her energies

outside the home. He reflected on the privilege of class that his mother didn't need the

money, but still wanted to be paid for her work. However, "mission" and other types of

religious work, in my experience, is often not very well paid.

> *My mom went back to work when I got in high school, uhm, because she*
> *wanted to. And for a long time she was even working at a job where it*

> *was mostly mission work .... She didn't have to go get paid, but she*
> *wanted to, so, that was a big difference that came with class ....*

This distinction between a man and woman's social class becomes even more clear when there is a divorce in a heterosexual relationship, especially when there are children involved. A number of participants in the study discussed the interaction of gender and social class of divorce on straight women. This participant shared how she has seen gender and class interact both through her own adult life and as a child.

> *in my life divorce has played a part in class. ...I was married and lived a*
> *very nice lifestyle, we were middle class but doing very well, and very*
> *comfortable and I divorced and went way down. I lived off of sixteen*
> *thousand a year which is pretty amazing...I'm living with somebody now*
> *who is taking care of my living expenses so I don't have that pressure....*

I was touched during the focus groups when another participant affirmed this woman's ability to survive on twelve thousand of those dollars as she paid four thousand for tuition. This participant shared her childhood experience when her parents divorced.

> *While growing up, my parents divorced which threw us down the scale.*
> *We had to live...in a, uhm, low-income housing type thing and it was scary*
> *...for me. Uhm, so that decrease in social status though I was little, I*
> *definitely felt it...then, when my parents married each other again, we*
> *moved up again, and then they divorced again, and we moved back down,*
> *and then my mom slowly started struggling to bring us back up.*

Both her father and the man she divorced had more resources than either her mother or she had after the divorce. She mentioned she did not feel "entitled" to take "anything" when she was divorced. I wonder if the interaction of gender and class–being a woman and living "down the scale" discouraged her sense of entitlement?

> *My dad always had money. When my parents' divorced.because a lot of*
> *his income was cash, it wasn't reported and how can he be expected to pay*
> *when he's not really making that much but he always had a wad of money*
> *in his shoe or sock...gender has a lot to do with divorce because when I*
> *left my husband, I didn't take anything, I just left, I was entitled but I didn't*
> *feel the entitlement to that. ... if my dad had paid more child support and*
> *taken care of us more...we wouldn't have sank as low...'cause my mom*

> *went back to work and she was working full time and I had a key around my neck in first grade. So it would have been much easier.*

Health/ability

Several participants were very conscious of how the lack of health and disability can have an influence on social class. While those who are privileged have access to better health care, this next participant pointed out the impact of chronic or life-threatening illness on the family and the perception that the family does not experience the same benefits of those of their same class.

> *When somebody had a chronic illness, it's a strain on the support systems as well as on the financial systems, so if you have a fifty- two year old man ...who has a stroke, or a heart attack and can't work...and requires certain kinds of care, it makes the family constellation change, makes the cash flow change. Often times people are forced to leave the place where they are living for cheaper accommodations which changes the location, kids maybe have to leave prep schools, uhm, mom has to go to work, so the income is reduced but also the social supports in the whole system is changed. Even in families where there is money but there is a chronic disease ...the family's truly changed. Their perception of where they are in this life also changes. I've seen people in the upper classes of society having children who have severe developmental disabilities almost be isolated from their social class. They may still have the income but they don't have the supports and they're not at that same level. .....*

I imagine, however, this isolation from one's social supports is lessened the more affluent the family is, especially if they can afford and are willing to use paid support personnel either in domestic functions such as cooking, cleaning, transportation, etc. or as either primary or backup auxiliary care-giving functions such as bathing, clothing. Yet, people need personal support as well as physical support. This next participant reminded us that the impact on social class is also likely with mental illness.

> *I was working as a case manager with severally mentally ill adults .... I had worked with people who had master's degrees ... had a lot of education, had a lot of opportunities, uhm, came from high class ... but had mental illness, mental breakdown, and had nothing, and were basically living on the state's little bit of money that they give them.*

This scenario is likely with working, middle and even "upper middle" class families, in other words for those who depend on an earned income to sustain their lifestyle. For those whose lifestyle is supported by inheritance or investments, the social class impact would be less than that of less privileged families. The Kennedy family by self-report was devastated by the diagnosis of their sister's Rosemary's "mental retardation." Nonetheless, with their money they were able to insulate their family from the burden of care my family experienced with my mentally challenged sister.

> *The stigma of certain diseases whether it's mental health or AIDS or things that people feel you bring on yourself ... changes somebody's class.*

Stigmatized illness like AIDS has a tremendous emotional impact. I think it also devastates many social systems including family systems and often impacts people's ability to hold a regular job. Certainly this would also impact people's status in the communities in which they are involved. The more affluent someone is, the more they can lesson the impact on their social class. They can hire publicity people, make it a national focus turning a "stigma" into a national priority. Betty Ford did this with alcoholism, Magic Johnson with HIV, Christopher Reeves with being quadriplegic, and Michael J. Fox with Parkinson's disease. This is not to minimize the devastating personal, familial, career and emotional consequences of these illnesses.

> *If you fit society's expectations of your intelligence level, your physical ability, then you can attain certain levels of social class. Just to kinda emphasize society's expectation of, you know, who's smart, who is you know, good physically, who, you know, even just who fits the idea of beauty, I mean all that kinda fits into I could think how far you can succeed, what's available to you, to allow to succeed.*

Age/death

Most participants discussed age and social class in terms of concerns about aging. Participants talked about retirement, caring for elderly parents, access to health care and

how parents viewed their own aging. Aging increases the need for access to health care
and in the United States, the quality of that access depends on social class. This next
participant talked about the influence of both age and death on her family. Her father's
life was changed by the unexpected death from appendicitis of his uncle while her
husband's life was altered by his father being "killed by a drunk driver." In both cases,
age also had an influence – both were young enough to be dependant and expecting the
financial and probably emotional support of these two male figures.

> *his uncle was going to pay for his education and...died of an appendicitis*
> *attack and his, his wife didn't give him the money to go. his sense has*
> *always been that he has never achieved what he should have achieved ....*
> *[husband's] dad died...when my husband was eleven. He was killed by a*
> *drunk driver and so, there's this thing with ... my husband's side of his*
> *family around taking care of mom. ...all four kids contribute to pay for her*
> *house and on my family, uhm, my mom and dad go down to [state] in the*
> *winter and all the kids in my family contribute to paying for that place ....*

These deaths apparently also have financial impact in the present on both these
families as this participant and her husband as well as their siblings financially support
their parents as they have aged.

> *I'm shouldering all the responsibilities in that we are ... funneling money*
> *to both parents' survival and ...being able to keep what they have .... just*
> *being able to do this just one extra thing, it, it makes the difference in*
> *terms of where I'm going to go ... how I see things and how I'm going to*
> *do my profession. And because I stay here I don't have as many choices*

One of the most interesting ideas that came out was how aging can be a social class
equalizer for those who are healthy, able and active in comparison to their aging peers,
even if those peers had more status per their occupations and social class. I wonder if we
are talking about status and social position or social class?

> *When I go down there and visit my father, there's something about*
> *everybody being old and there's people down there that have a lot more*
> *money and big, big jobs, as he would say...and he takes his saxophone*
> *and he plays in the nursing homes...and feels more equal in some ways by*

> *being an older person and they have health problems and they're deteriorating even ...at a faster rate than he is and there's something about the equaling of getting older that...has really helped him.*

Spirituality/religion

> *We cannot leave out...the impact of religion...this incredible Christian conservatism, uhm, and one of the ethics of many Protestant religions is... whatever your situation, it is God's will for you...the reward's in heaven, you don't have to work here quite so much because you're really trying to die and...you know, you should pick yourself up by your own bootstraps.*

Many participants talked about the impact of religion on social class. On one hand, one participant already shared how her extended family's religion and spirituality helped her family survive unemployment. Another talked about the Christian virtue in being poor. A number of participants, however, were concerned about the oppressive influences of religion. The quote above addressed the concern of people accepting their situation in life because the focus is on the next life, rather than here. On the other hand, there is almost a contradictory message about being responsible to "pick yourself up by your own bootstraps" i.e. if thing are bad here, it's your own fault because you haven't worked hard enough or weren't smart enough and you weren't good enough. The next participant used Marx's description of religion as the "opiate of the masses."

> *Some of the dominant religions ...you are taught to more or less deal with what you have, be thankful for what you have, uhm, not necessarily seek more...cause that's not good.... And you know when people ascribe and live by those tenets, dominant society uses them .... Religion is the opiate of the masses, you know, being drugged and brainwashed into not achieving...not wanting to succeed....*

This participant suggested that the opiate, "religion," drugged people so they would not want to succeed. Another participant from a different group had a similar reaction and suggested that religion taught people to be content with "what you have."

> *these rich white churches, you know, that you see over here and ...there are poor minority churches ...but they don't go to the rich churches and*

> *say, "Hey, you know, I think you all have some, something here." ...it's almost like, uhm, almost like religion...segregates or moderates social class differences ...and that you have to be content with what you have.*

The contrast between the haves and have-nots in religion was highlighted by this participant. Some of the churches are huge, "testaments to the power" and "glory of God." The contrast or gulf between the populace and the priest was also noted.

> *Some of the churches ...are like huge mausoleums and mansions ... as testaments to...the power ...and the glory of God and so we build. ...the Catholic Church has always been, you know, yelled at for actually being in the middle of poverty and having gold chalices from which the priests are drinking. ...the contrast between the populace and the priest is tremendously large, you know, but no one's revolting against that....*

This same contrast of the have and have-nots were noted in the vows of poverty taken by religious and spiritual leaders by this next participant. While these poverty vows were often revered, she also pointed out that religious leaders who are very opulent in their lifestyle were not respected.

> *the dichotomy about money and when one who doesn't have it seems to be a very, very negative thing and yet, we revere those who have given up money for some, uhm, higher value... people who have taken a vow of poverty or uhm, decided to live a simple life, given up to the poor thousands of dollars, we do still revere that. We don't want to be there and we'll trash any religious leader who we feel has taken that vow of poverty and they've got a whole, you know, sixteen Mercedes or whatever.*

Finally, another oppressive aspect of religion was noted in the prevalence of anti-Semitism in the dominant Christian world. This flourished under the stereotype that Jews were "greedy."

> *the tremendous anti-Semitism in this...world, stems from the stereotype that the Jews are the ones controlling money and are greedy*

I wonder how these and other religious stereotypes serve the dominant discourse of the upper classes about social class? As people focus their hatred and anger on Jews and Muslims and even non-dominant Christian religions, what else are we missing?

Nationality/ ethnicity

> *Americans think ...most internationals are very rich ... And that surprised*
> *me a lot ... when I came here, you know, to be classified as what kind of*
> *suitors, do you have a royal family ? Do you ride an elephant?*

Nationality and ethnicity both have an effect on social class. As the participant above

states, many Americans assume that most international people are very affluent. Some

indeed are. There are many ways that international people come to study and live in the

U. S. Most may be privileged to live here in comparison to many of their compatriots

from their country. Some internationals, however, work in deplorable conditions in the

fields, in sweatshops and some are actually enslaved in the sex trade and drug operations.

Rarely do people working under these conditions manage to have access to many

resources such as health care, education, and decent housing. A number of economically

disadvantage students are often sponsored by their governments or other private groups.

Many religious groups and even non-profit groups sponsor bright, lower income students

to come to study in the U.S. Rarely are these students the most impoverished just as U.S.

students who are very poor rarely have an opportunity to study outside of the U.S. unless

they are exceptionally bright.

Internationals from more privileged families may experience some change of social

class in the U.S. This participant described her own change of social status. She

described an important cultural value-system; South Korean families continued to be

involved in their children's lives financially and emotionally after they reach adulthood.

> *We were actually upper middle class, ...so when we immigrated [in like*
> *the early 80's, we kind of went down a bit .... I can't remember a time*
> *when I actually ever worried about not having a place to live, or eat or*
> *just about money, and not until probably now because I'm in school. I'm*
> *trying to do this on my own, where still my parents are like, "Why are*
> *stressing over financial situations? We'll provide." But I think that also*
> *has to do with class but also culture, too, because ... with my friends, I*

> *mean, their parents really provide for them, even until after they get married. Financially, emotionally, they are very supportive.*

This is very different than the U.S discourse of independence when a child become an "adult." However, the practice in my experience is very different from the reality except in many working-class families who do not have the financial "means" to continue to provide support for their children. I sometimes wonder if we as the working-class in the U.S. haven't internalized this "ideal" of independence more than the middle and upper classes. I also wonder how the South Korean norm of financial support might be different in less privileged families or how gender impacts this expectation?.

Language and accent are other issues that influence social class. Americans are particularly unforgiving and intolerant. This participant told about a doctor friend who experienced a significant change of social class when he came to the U.S. and did not speak English very well.

> *A friend who…was a doctor in Spain, came to America and he couldn't practice … uhm, until his English is better…he's had to go from being very respected and very high class, working in the best hospitals…down to the bottom. That was a big awakening …to be treated like he was nobody.*

While it certainly is understandable from a safety perspective that this man needed to work on his English before practicing with most of the population, I wonder how his skills could be used after testing in his own language, in service to those immigrants or residents from their own countries who don't speak English well either. If we considered this a priority, we would figure out a way to pair people and make this happen for the advantage of each. Our country is often not very hospitable to foreigners.

I wonder what this person's expectations were concerning privilege and status that went along with his role as a doctor. I worked with a Latina doctor who was working as a cleaning woman to support her family while she was learning English. I was very

impressed with her compassion and lack of a sense of entitlement. She was eager to use her medical skills to secure a better future for her children, to serve others and to work in a more comfortable environment. She believed, however, that her domestic work was honorable and she treated her co-employees with respect and dignity.

The next participant experienced firsthand the U.S. elitism of perceiving that her parents were not intelligent, educated people because they spoke "imperfect" English.

> *people perceive that, too, as being less educated…my dad graduated from one of the top, actually number one university in Korea, but here, you know, he owns a business, so, even though his clientele is upper class, they still perceive him as down here (gestures lower) because he's working, so …my parents don't struggle with it, and I think I struggle more with that, because it's like, you can't say because they have an accent, because they forget to put the verb, correctly, that they're less educated.*

I had a wonderful Korean teacher as an undergraduate in social work. Many of the students were hostile towards him and actually thought he was stupid because of his English. He was one of the three best professors I had in my undergraduate experience. When he invited me to his wedding, I was astounded to learn that this man was a very prestigious leader in the Korean community in one of the largest U.S. cities. I felt honored to have been included in such a special and impressive occasion.

Elitism regarding regional accents in the U.S. and the assumptions of intelligence and social class that go along with that are very prevalent in the U.S. today. Certainly Southerners are prime targets. As a Yankee child raised in my early elementary years in the North, I, too, picked up these prejudices. When my parents told me we were moving South to Florida when I was ten, I threw my first (and last) tantrum as I conjured up a classist image of dirty, barefoot and ignorant people, picked up from children's literature.

This next participant suggested that there is a diversity of ideas about social class depending on one's individual family, culture, religion / spirituality and nationality. She

mentioned, for example, the possible different views an Israeli family might have from other, perhaps U.S., Jewish families

> *I'm Jewish, a white female, and I have an entirely different perception of social class, and status, and ... in my own personal family it's, like, it's completely divided. It's the family that has the money, and then like my mom, (chuckling) you know, cause she married, you know, down. So, you know, for me it's a totally different issue, and uhm, you know an African American family would be an entirely different way...or a Latin family, or like you were bringing up India, you know. So I think that that speaks a lot to culture, and religion and spirituality, and maybe even on an individual basis, even because there are other Jewish families, like Israeli. An Israeli family would view it entirely different, you know.*

Sexual orientation

Although there were twenty-five quotes which mentioned sexual orientation, sexual identity or homophobia and the interaction of social class, most participants did not elucidate how they thought social class interacted with sexual orientation. Two quotes were not included in this chapter because one referred to therapy with a client and another was given as an example of a program learning from and responding to student initiatives to develop a more sensitive curriculum. Many of the quotes involving divorce or other relationship issues usually include gender, class and sexual orientation issues. Because the dominant discourse assumes heterosexual orientation in marriage (sometimes incorrectly) and other relationships, like many social class issues, it is difficult to clearly examine how sexual orientation influences these issues as well as sex/gender, ability, age, race, religion and other aspects of one's identity.

One of the first and most helpful books I read about social class issues was a book edited by Julia Penelope (1994b), *Out of the Class Closet, Lesbians Speak*. In addition to both reminding me and opening my eyes about social class issues in general, many issues were raised in terms of sexual orientation, gender, and social class. For example, in

"Class and Consciousness," Penelope brought up a difference in work orientation often present between lesbians and their straight sisters that speaks to sexual orientation, gender and social class.

> There is a significant way in which lifelong lesbians differ from our heterosexual sisters: those of us who have always been lesbians … grew up knowing we were going to have to earn a living for ourselves …. A lesbian living as a lesbian must work for a living, unless she gets lucky and finds a woman with enough money to support them both, and there aren't that many wealthy lesbians. (p.28)

While Penelope made some assumptions about social class, race, ability, ethnicity and even gender (i.e., other groups of women may have also felt they had no choice but to depend on themselves for financial support or for example, if differently abled, may have to deal with the idea of dependency). Nonetheless, it is important to have this different mindset from the dominant discourse explored from a different perspective. Other authors that discuss social class and sexual orientation include Gloria Anzaldua (1987), Joanna Kadi (1996), Cherrie Moraga (1983; 1983), and Tracy Robinson (1999).

While this perspective was alluded to throughout this research and is an important factor that impacts social class, it was not sufficiently expanded on or explored to contribute to our awareness of social class from this perspective. Like social class, it appears that sexual orientation is still coming out of the closet in many programs.

Social Mobility

> *"going in class." You know, … they are places, rather than who … or what you are or what you are all about.*
>
> *There's no way that I want to go back to where I originally was because I know how much hardship it is and how hard it is to be in that lower class with families and struggling …*

The United States for generations has been seen as the land of opportunity. Most of us are here because our ancestors or we came to seek a better life or because our ancestors

were kidnapped and/or exploited to help create that better life. Most came here primarily for economic reasons although others came for political or religious reasons. Some like my French-Canadian Catholic and Irish Catholic ancestors came for all three reasons. The hope for upward economic and social mobility was what drew most.

Social mobility is woven into our national consciousness. It is what drives people to work so many hours, to follow better-paying jobs away from extended family, and to take on enormous debt in the hope of securing a more comfortable and stable lifestyle. Participants did experience and reported both upward and downward mobility for themselves and family members. Some people reported moving from being poor to middle and upper middle class. A few mentioned sliding from middle class lifestyles to being poor, especially for women and their families after a divorce. No one reported moving into the upper class from being working-class. Except what appeared to be a more transitional, temporary situation as students, no one mentioned moving from upper class to a more permanent working or middle class.

Significant other's expectations

Participants shared their own hopes and desires for a better life. They talked about their family's and community's expectations for them regarding social mobility and the resulting influence on their lives.

> *The story about those four daughters sounded very oppressive to me. ... these women had no choice. . . .their father decided what was going to happen. ... how people perceive their class standing effects their self-determination, they have to improve, they have to climb up the ladder.*

Many participants reported that part of their desire to get an education and improve their lives came from the expectations of significant others, especially parents, extended family and their communities. For some, that "expectation" was a helpful push. Others

did not even think about expectations; they were part of life. Some reported that sometimes the pressure was too much. Several refused to try to live up to their parents and society's expectations. One described feeling caught in the middle between double messages, part of the second text hidden: I am proud of you and yet, [don't be] a yuppie. My mother was more direct with her double messages. She wanted me to get my bachelor's degree but kept telling me I was getting "too big" for my "britches."

This participant was clear that her parents' message for success was to go to school and "be a doctor."

> *My parents always told me I would be a doctor from the time I was five (she laughs heartily joined by others). My sister didn't even get a college education ... She just went out and was a waitress for a few years, got married, and that was fine. ... but they definitely are more happy with me going to school, ... it's always been encouraged ... "if you're going to make it, you gotta go to school."*

Many working-class families realize education is an important gateway or door of opportunity for their children. Others encourage other avenues, perhaps because education was not available for them or closed rather than opened doors. My father wanted me to be an airline stewardess so I could see the world. He knew I wanted to fly but he did not have the money to make that happen even with an instructor's license, as he did not have access to a plane. There is a big push towards the military for their children, especially their sons, my family of origin included. It is often the only financially affordable way people learn a marketable skill, albeit with its life-threatening and emotional risks. More working-class women are seeing the military as an option and recruiters are targeting female high school students. Among those who called themselves "lower class," "poor" or working-class, participants mentioned the military or armed

services in regards to their fathers or grandfathers. It is unclear how many participants

served in the military or how that might have opened doors previously shut.

This next participant's mother also wanted a "doctor in the family." Her daughter felt

her mother was "climbing through her children." She also felt that her mother was

disappointed in the way her children dressed and other markers of their class status after

she and her brother earned their degrees.

> *I come from a working-class family of, uhm, high school graduates.*
> *Actually, my father got his G.E.D. ... going to college was a big deal and I*
> *went on for my master's years ago and my mom was so excited and then*
> *my brother went off for his master's. So this is my second Masters and she*
> *wants me to get a doctorate because she wants a doctor in the family, she*
> *doesn't care what kind .... My mom's climbing through her children and*
> *neither my brother nor I are what she would want as far as social*
> *climbers. We don't dress the way she would like us to ... My brother has a*
> *little farm ... he dug his own septic tank ... he does everything himself. ...*
> *it's totally not my mom's idea for us.*

What social class did this participant and her brother consider themselves? If people

want to change their social class in addition to their status, is that possible? Who could

decide? What are the social rules? Does someone have the privilege to change their

class "downward"? Would someone who is affluent be accepted as working-class?

Accepted by whom? How about someone who is middle class? What if that someone is

Latina? How are the social "rules" different? Who decides what the "rules" are?

This participant felt her mother was "trying to live through" her. The expectation in

the family was that everyone graduated from college. This participant married after

completing her degree. Her mother wanted her to get a master's degree "to survive in

this country." Although she initially said "No way," she pursued a graduate degree.

> *My grandparents, they've all graduated, all except one, from college. One*
> *was a professor...so you don't question about going to college. ...my mom*
> *...as far as I can remember in high school, she'd like, "after you go to*
> *college, you know, you should really get a masters to survive in this*

> *country" so she pushed and pushed, and I was like, "No way," I want to*
> *get married and have kids...my mom was trying to live, uhm, through me.*

What does it mean to try to live through a child? What opportunities might a child have that are closed to a parent? How does this vary by social class, status, gender, nationality, health or other social constructs? What are the different social class "rules" regarding fulfilling parents' expectations? Does this vary by social class or are other social constructs more indicative? How clear are those expectations? Does the clarity of expectations vary by social class and race or social class and ethnicity?

Our society values the individual over the family unit, men and independence over women and interdependence, the nuclear family over the extended family or community. We espouse and honor values that support a lifestyle that is at least middle class. How might our perspective on parents "living through" their children be different if our societal values honored women, interdependence, the extended family and revered values that help the working class survive by "chain" opportunities. The latter is when families decide to focus their resources on one family member who might have a better opportunity to get ahead with the understanding that that person had a responsibility to help the next family member. Parents are an integral part of this chain.

This next participant shared a story of continuing to struggle against her father's expectations for her as a teenager. When she received an invitation to a debutante ball, signaling that her father had "made it," that the family was accepted in the prevailing social milieu, she fought against going because of the associated classism and racism. She finally did go, however, because "after all, he was my father."

> *I always was in trouble with my father... because I insisted on having*
> *friends who were poorer than we were and who were black...I didn't get*
> *in trouble for anything else but that. I think his family was...probably very*
> *lower middle class. My mom made our clothes, too,...made the curtains*

> *on our house, made everything ...but he worked very, very hard to raise himself up in his mind.... I kept reminding him (laughs), you know, ...I didn't know that at the time...but that's what it was, and one of the biggest fights we ever had ... was I got asked to be in the debutante ball ... the most idiotic, most, you know, classist, racist, 'cause I was pretty much an activist, too, you know, and for him, it was a sign ... that he had made it. ..that we were accepted. .... Well, you know, he was my father ... so, yeah, I did go ... And that was interesting later on ... in his life, how some things kind of switched for him, he ended up losing everything he had. And, uhm, to be dependent on people in ways he never imagined he would be ... people of a lower social class and a different color skin ....*

This participant ruefully reflected on the irony of her father "losing everything" and being dependent on people of "lower social class and a different color skin."

This next participant and his sister were both "professionals" but in professions that he suggested would lead to middle class rather than upper middle class jobs. He felt that this "not having money" (in comparison to his father) wouldn't "change anything."

> *I was raised in an upper middle class family, uhm, generationally has always been either a working or middle class family for a long time. My dad has his doctoral degree, uhm, is very intelligent, and has had good jobs for a long time, so, uhm, I probably don't have a prayer in making the salary that he does.... My sister and I have one older sister who is a teacher, uhm, so both of us have...taken a small step back in social class but...probably not anything that would be significant in how we view ourselves. ...my not having money or having a middle class job rather than an upper middle class job is going to really change anything. ...*

Are there social class differences in families' expectations that a child increases their economic status? Are there different expectations between upper and upper middle class family's expectations about economic mobility? How does social class stability for middle and upper middle class families provide more flexibility in expectations for children? What is the difference between social mobility and economic mobility if any? If there is a difference, why do we call it social mobility?

In addition to fulfilling family expectations, one African American participant experienced expectations from her community in addition to her family. She did so well

in her undergraduate studies that people wanted her earn a master's although she did not feel ready. She was working on her Master's and considering a doctorate but wanted to get married. She felt a lot of pressure from both her family and community.

> *For my family... there's a, uhm, very strong work ethic, that was more important as far as establishing your status ...that you contributed to your community .... Uhm, I have one uncle on my mother's side who has a Ph.D., uhm, and one aunt who has a bachelors and uhm, when I got my bachelors and ...graduated in three years and I was third in my class, that was a big thing. ... they were like, ... you did so well, go for more....(Laughing). Uhm, when I had graduated from my undergrad I wasn't ready, ... but there was that push, that ... pressure, and even ... when I complete my Master's next year, I'm like, "OK, I'm thinking about, you know, doing a doctorate but ...I want to get married and start a family ...there's a lot of pressure to make it for everybody else ... not only within my family but also within the community.*

What other racial, ethnic, or national groups feel a sense of responsibility to take advantage of opportunities offered for their communities in addition to their families and themselves? How does social class influence this sense of obligation? What other factors inform this interplay between an individual and community?

When I was awarded a full tuition scholarship to go to college, I did feel a sense of responsibility to represent my community, a semi-rural, sprawling group of neighborhoods clustered around a little village. Those of us who were black or white working-class and a few of the white middle-class kids rode the bus together to junior high and later high school to the nearby town. Some of the middle class and many of the upper class students had their own cars. Others drove the additional distance to the next, even larger town which had a variety of private schools.

I was the only student in my grade and in several grades before and after who rode the bus and took college preparatory classes. All the whites had attended the village elementary school together. Before integration occurred in seventh grade, I did not go to

school with the black kids from my village although our summer recreation program had been integrated for years so I knew my black classmates. It was no surprise that I was the one who won a scholarship among the bus crew. I did feel a sense of representing that community. I was proud of my hard work and achievements. I was also aware that it was a privilege that was extended toward me. If my skin had been a different color or if my parents had not surrounded me with books, I would not have gone on to college or been able to pay the tuition. When I "won" the scholarship, I felt I was representing my village school and the kids on that bus, especially important because the "town kids" often "looked down upon" the rural and village children.

> There's a tremendous emphasis in that culture of not getting beyond your
> raising but secretly hoping that you'll get out of it. It's just so deep ....
> There are people that know me well that I've never spoken to about it.

Two of the working-class participants reported being "squeezed" or feeling tugged in two different directions about improving their economic circumstances. This was a very common occurrence in the literature of the educated, working-class people mentioned previously. This last participant suggested that this was "so deep" that she had not even spoken about it with friends who knew her well. Many working-class people were encouraged to take advantage of whatever opportunities they had while not forgetting who they are or where they were from. This conflict has been represented in television for example in *An American Family* series with a college-bound Chicana daughter struggling both with social class and ethnicity issues as she gives her speech in front of her schoolmates. It has also surfaced in popular film such as *Good Will Hunting* when the main character's best friend tells him he would be crazy not to take advantage of the options he has when this character is struggling with leaving behind the old neighborhood. The film, however, does not address the continuing conflict many

educated, working-class people feel throughout their lives, both when they are with those from their neighborhood or community as well as when they are with social classes very different from their own or when their social class or origin is under attack. *An American Family* exposes and explores this continual conflict. This next participant is in the throes of that conflict with her mother.

> *She's not sure if ... you know, if I'm ashamed of her ... if I move up, so I feel ... squeezed a little. And then I have shame on the other end because I, you know, have gotten well-ahead of my mother educationally, uhm, and my opportunities are different, she'll lovingly ... call me a yuppy ... if I buy shoes at someplace that's not K-Mart ....*

In addition to the pressure to succeed from their families or from their communities, many people feel pressured from the dominant society to achieve and get ahead, to not be content with their class. This participant addressed that expectation.

> *People who have the majority amounts of money set the standards by which we all find ourselves in a position to desire to achieve or not. If we are comfortable with, you know, just a place to live whether it's a house or an apartment, whether I own it or not, to be able to provide for my basic needs and my family's and I'm not necessarily interested in...having...a Mercedes...the dominant culture says you should strive for x, y, and z, and it's not ok if you're comfortable living in, you know, the projects and satisfied with yourself and your life. That's not Ok. ...other people set the standards ...we all find ourselves working to live up to or to achieve.*

When I asked this participant what would society think if a person chose to be content with their basic needs met rather than striving to get ahead, she responded:

> *[People who choose to be content] are viewed as incompetent. They're. ... less than, .and unworthy, and ... undeserving of basic respect... or acknowledgment. You don't deserve it.*

Another group discussing this issue believed that society would look down on people who chose to be content with a simple lifestyle. They suggested that these people would be considered inferior, "sub" or "less than" human. I personally have never had anyone outside of my family openly criticize me for making choices that simplify my life in

many respects. My extended family has challenged me to be "more responsible" and "get a real job" (i.e., better paying). I have heard of people from affluent families who have chosen to live more simple lives being disowned by their families or their families being "ashamed" of their relative. This happens in families of all classes but the meaning of this choice might vary with each social class. It is one thing to be a disappointment to your family or for your family to feel a sense of betrayal. It is another thing to be considered less human by the dominant society because of social mobility choices.

Social class myths

A number of participants commented on prevalent social class myths concerning social mobility. One participant animatedly related a story that he "can never forget" about an incident involving this belief in social mobility and the owner of a white Rolls Royce. Several focus group participants echoed the details as they remembered together.

> *That's one of the myths also ...that there is equal movement access to anyone across economic class.... I can never forget. ...I went to [a restaurant] ...this man was sitting there eating dinner, and he had this white Rolls Royce. ... and this fellow sticks his head in and he's pushing this shopping cart filled with this stuff, obviously not someone wealthy. uhm, and said, "Hey, nice car, man," The fellow said, "It could be yours. You could do it, too!" ...what was implied [was] ... if you just stop being so damn lazy ... if you just worked hard enough.*

This idea of the myth of social mobility was presented by another participant in a different focus group. He called it "the American dream" and pointed to our philosophy of the individual who is responsible for their own fortune or failure.

> *My reflection is that it's the American dream, you know, if you are at the bottom, it's your own fault, and if you want to move up, then everybody can move up, you know, which is this, uhm, illusion .... There's no ... dream that's comparable to the American dream. . . the thing here is the individualistic philosophy. You, you're responsible for your fortune ....*

It's amazing that we still hold this myth so dear when for most families throughout time, it has taken the combined work of family members, paid and unpaid, to help the family to survive and thrive. Even with the strong cultural response to the cult of domesticity which moralized that a woman's proper place was in the home, most women have had to provide economically for their families through wage labor, taking in borders, raising their own vegetables, cooking, laundering, cleaning, and with the advent of suburbs, transporting children. Those uncompensated services would have expended considerable family financial resources to provide. Woman, especially middle class women, fought for and are slowly winning the right to have equal access to employment (although the battle for equal pay is still being fought). The irony is that the choice for women not to work is being narrowed for middle class families who want to "get ahead" as this next participant reminded us. It has always been true for the working-class.

> in the U.S., you almost have to have two incomes to even get into the upper middle class.

Social mobility is more often a joint effort, not an individual pursuit. It takes the adults in the family unit, and often times in working-class families, the help of adolescent children, if any, and sometimes the help of extended families and community.

The myth of the middle class was mentioned by this next participant. This was brought up after another participant had made a statement that indicated that everyone in the focus group was middle class.

> Like the myth of the middle class or the safety of the middle class, we can all define ourselves as middle class, …there's a sense of camaraderie. We don't have to challenge the injustices or the inequities in society if we all sort of sustain this myth that we're all middle class.

I wonder, for example, with this next participant, if his parents or even grandparents came from a working or middle class background. Would that account for the fact that

his father would say "middle class" and he also believed he was middle class until he was older and saw the family finances. Even though they lived in an upper class neighborhood, what differences in addition to "not keeping up with the Joneses" did he observe and experience? Or was his father merely evoking the middle class myth?

> *We, uhm, lived in an area where...we were middle class, because there were a lot of other people who were upper class, ...even in my high school even though we were making, you know, my dad was making plenty of money and my mom had a job, too, it, it was middle class. But, looking at larger society, it was probably, it was more than that, uhm, but ...I don't recall ever, you know, kind of the keeping up with the Jones' attitude in my parents. It, it really wasn't there.*

I was confused by this next quote and I finally realized that it's because this participant is "hitting the nail on the head." She is making a distinction between economic mobility and social class. There are some people are fortunate enough to "move up" the economic scale. The possibility of doing so depends on your social class. Even if you are able to, it does not mean that you change your social class. Perhaps the children do, but even they often internalize messages that are grounded in the social class experience of the parent.

> *With our society and the upward mobility ... as people move along the ... economic spectrum, they have more ... of an ability to be able to choose or you know, find out where their comfort zone is, where . . . you are born into a certain social class and you always stay there ..... I don't think you have as much, uhm, as much leeway because ... it's something you have to experience, it's not something that you can just learn and say, "OK, now I'm going to behave this way. . .. a certain culture.*

This next participant saw it differently. Is it a both/and? Are some people able to "play with it a bit and decide where [they] fit? I wonder if those who are able to do that are people who are already straddle the social classes? Perhaps they have messages from one parent in one class and messages from the other parent in a different social class.

there kind of is a blurring because you can consider yourself of a mid to lower social class and kind of vice-versa depending on where you place your priorities or even how you choose to present yourself in society, you can sort of play with it a little bit and decide where you fit.

For me it comes down a lot to choices.....there's a lot of things wrapped up into social class for me but it come down to the...choices that people feel they do or don't have and how they conduct their lives. What they see as possibilities...and uhm, the limiting or unlimiting, uhm, pieces for them. Choices in terms of, like every aspect of your life, who you're with, where, where you live, uhm, what you do, for work or how you get your money.... ...the lower you are in social class the less choice you have and the higher you are, the more choice you have. ... And so on in all areas of your life. That, that's the way that I see it ...uhm, sort of organizing things.

Similar to this participant, most but not all participants in the study felt that one's

social class determined one's opportunities and choices in life. The higher one's social

class, the more opportunities and the more choices people had and vice-versa. This next

participant was amazed that her friend who came from a "lower middle class family" did

not realize he might have more choices that he thought. In terms of careers, he felt an

obligation to financially provide for his family. He didn't realize he might be able to

financially provide for this family *and* have enough time to be there for his children.

What are the sacrifices that come with being an airline pilot? ...one of the sacrifices is the time. You are away for three or four days out of the week consistently. And he said the money, you know,...do I sacrifice not being able to give my children the things that they want monetarily or do I sacrifice the time with them? And for me, there is such a clear answer... you don't sacrifice the time, you forgo the money. But uhm, being brought up in actually a lower middle class family ...and never had the monetary things, uhm and so that was his values. That was what was important to him, was to give his children, whatever financial security but without a father. ...he had never considered that, going in a different direction, that he could have maybe money and time.

One of the "hidden injuries" of social class according to Sennett and Cobb (1973) in

their book of that name is internalizing the lessons of our social class. For this

participant, life had taught her that one has choices. When it came to issues such as

family financial security or having time for children, the latter is the greater value. Yet,

really she did not feel that such a choice was necessary. For her friend, his life, organized

by social class, had taught him that one usually had a limited amount of choices,

oftentimes mutually competing, desirable choices. Even as life circumstances change, it

would be difficult to view life from a different perspective: a life with more expansive

opportunities and choices, or a life with more limited opportunities and choices.

> *Who has time? Who has self determination? Who has the means to*
> *achieve their goals? You can't talk about class without talking about the*
> *other intervening variables in the person's life....I wonder...about the idea*
> *of class being operationally defined as to what degree of self-*
> *determination you feel you possess or what you material means you have*
> *to do what you'd like to be doing?*

Another word that often came up along with choices and opportunities was self-

determination. This last participant suggested that social class might be defined by the

degree of self-determination someone felt they possessed or the material means someone

had to pursue their goals. Most participants indicated a similar understanding about self-

determination, that it is "impacted" by one's resources as this next participant challenged.

> *Self-determination is in part impacted in part by ...personal or material*
> *resources. It's easy for us, this educated lot, to sit around and shake our*
> *heads about self- determination as we are all pursuing our professional*
> *goals but . . . we can drive ten blocks over and let's take a poll there.*

Economics does not "determine" one's self-determination, disagreed this participant.

> *Maybe that's where self-determination comes in and if you have*
> *determined what you want to do, and you're happy with what you are*
> *doing, I don't think it has anything to do with your economic status.*

This last participant seemed to have a both/add perspective that self-determination

both depended on social class or availability of resources and the people resources that

fueled her own self-determination. Her father had the self-determination but neither the

material resources not the support to make his goals a reality. His family's needs were a higher, probably survival, priority.

> My dad wanted to continue his education but his mother needed him to get out of high school and help support his family at home. He will go back and attribute that every time to why he didn't go further. There was not the support, the drive, the push, uhm, it wasn't a priority. ... I'm here where I am today because I had the resources, I had people push me from behind. Their determination fed into my self-determination to get me where I wanted to be today.

I wonder how much self-determination is internalized expectation. How about for this participant's father. Whose expectation was he internalizing? How would his life have been different he had the material resources to use his determination to pursue his goals? How would it have been different if he had both the material and family support to pursue them? How might his family have been more supportive if they had the material resources to provide for the family survival and support their son in his goals? How often is family blamed for not being supportive of ambitious goals when it those goals are out of reach? What would happen if the parents were supportive but were helpless to provide the means? This participant described how her parents tried in their own ways to protect her from dreams beyond the parent's means.

> When I was fourteen years old and came home, and said to my family that I was thinking of going to Harvard, ... my dad said, "I don't think you're Harvard material." And my mom interpreting that remark for me, because it was such a devastating remark, and the whole thing gets so poignant... and it's hard to discuss because it is so layered and her interpretation of that remark was "What he means is that's not who we are." In other words, she understood it as a protective remark. (Sighs)

How do parents, especially working-class or black or parents of differently abled children encourage their children's dreams if those dreams seem unreachable? What is worse, having your children hate you for stifling their dreams or seeing your children beating themselves up when they were squashed by life because they were not "good

enough?" How does seeing your own children try so hard and yet hit the "glass ceilings" reactivate one's own experiences of classism? Do parents believe that their children, like themselves, are "not good enough"? What does goodness have to do with it, anyway?

> *I do feel a sense of loyalty to whatever I sort of deem as class. And interestingly, I also thought, too, when he said, "we were at best, lower middle class." And the sense of sort of ascribing again a status to that, that the best you would be was somewhere on that hierarchy (laughs).*

The societal norm is the higher the social class, the more valued, worthy, deserving or better that you are. The lower the social class, the less valued, worthy or deserving you are. You are less than a whole person. You are not better than anyone. On the contrary, those above you in social class are better than you. This next participant's quote focused on how her father's attitude was able to inoculate this participant from some of the poisoned valuing that comes with social class.

> *It was a matter of attitude growing up, my father's perspective was always, "You're not better than anybody else but nobody else is better than you." And I think from that perspective, that plus kind of being encouraged to be the best of whatever you're going to be, sort of erased class lines ....*

How else have parents inoculated their children from classism, minimizing the damage? How have people of class privilege being able to be conscious of and unpack their class privilege, challenge their own entitlement and contradict the messages that invite them to consider themselves more worthy and those of other classes less worthy?

What purpose do these myths *serve* in our society? One participant called it "blaming the victim" and suggested it assuages people's collective sense of responsibility for another's misfortune. This made it " somebody else's problem."

Blaming the victim …the myths say that it's up to you, it is your fault if you have not done something, rather than…collective accountability. And it somehow assuages

people's sense of responsibility or guilt or whatever. ...the idea that you should kind of make them go away and make it somebody else's problem.

By seeing social class as an individual's problem, a lack of self-determination, not being smart enough to make the "right choice," or the lack of courage or ambition to take advantage of available opportunities, we avoid shouldering any of the responsibility. We do not have to challenge the system because it works for us. We do not want to risk losing the privilege we have. This participant suggested that this was also a way of putting distance between "us"–the middle class–and anyone or anything that could be associated with "the slippery slope"–downward mobility.

> *That's more the middle-class attitude about poverty. If you think, about the middle class, Barbara Ehrenrich has written a lot about this. ... you're always on the slippery slope, you know, so you "dis" anything that could associate yourself with downward mobility. Blame them ....*

Would we be as afraid of poverty and the working-classes if we did not fear the threat of downward mobility ?

Another participant pointed out the comfort that the bootstrapping myth gives us to believe that people who don't make it, are not trying hard enough. If we were to find ourselves in similar circumstances, this myth convinces us we could pull ourselves out.

> *That myth of "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" also invests us in a sense of, hum, comfort, that if we should ever be there, all we have to do is pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and so it simultaneously gets us away from taking responsibility but gives us an opportunity to take responsibility if, if that should ever befall us, so to speak.*

Not all people blame those who find themselves in difficult circumstances. One participant talked about an extraordinary and compassionate woman who worked in a Medicaid office and believed that "there but for the grace of God go I."

> *There's this woman…who, uhm, works in the Medicaid office and she's a*
> *very compassionate woman …And I asked her, you know, how she*
> *remains that way and…she said, "There but for the grace of God go I."*
> *She felt that, you know, it was just a matter of a paycheck. …she could be*
> *in the same position and then she would be just as desperate because she*
> *knows how little there is available especially with the whole welfare thing*
> *and it's getting harder and harder.*

Not only the middle and upper classes blame those who struggle with poverty for their

social position and difficult circumstances. The working classes blame each other and

themselves. Many also blame and some victimize other oppressed groups such as gays,

women, blacks, and the elderly. Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the oppressed (1968)*

discussed the internalization of the image of the oppressor. While those who are less

privileged are able to see more clearly the privileges of those of the dominant class, the

oppressed often is blind as well. "Submerged in reality, the oppressed cannot see clearly

the "order' which serves the interests of the oppressors whose image they have

internalized (p.48)."

Women, gays, African Americans, the working-class, intersexuals often internalize

the oppression and blame projected by the dominant class. While we may be aware of

our lack of resources, we often assume it's because we're not smart enough, we haven't

tried hard enough, we have the wrong desire , we said the wrong thing, we weren't in the

right place at the right time, we didn't have the proper English, we're not good enough,

we were too emotional or we had the wrong or too many sex organs.

In this third section, social class identity was explored by participants. Identity is

relational to significant persons such as family of origin, intimates, and children. Social

class identity is influenced by social position and status. One's status is interaction with

one's other identities such as sexual orientation, race, gender and health/ability. Social

class identity is also shaped by social mobility issues: expectations by family and

community as well as by the social class mobility myths that blame the individual who does not succeed in climbing the social class ladder.

In this fourth and final section, participants explored how those with limited access to resources have different perspectives on the world and experience different lives.

Different Lenses, Different Chances, Different Lives

Being brought up within a particular social class changes our experience of and our perspective on the world, shaping our world-view. Our parents' different social class experiences affect how they bring us up. We are also influenced by experiences with our extended family, our playmates, our neighborhood, school, and the media such as advertising, cartoons, TV shows and movies. Not all children within a given social class or even within the same family have the same experiences, resulting in somewhat different lenses on the world. Other experiences of privilege or oppression further hone the lenses. Ability, health, race, age, sexual orientation, appearance, gender and other social constructs contribute to different life experiences and perspectives. Those social class experiences that are similar may create more mutual perspectives.

Other life experiences widen perspectives. Those who travel or immigrate to different cities, states, regions or countries are exposed to variations of social class. In my family, I moved five times (each time out of state and out of the region) and attended seven different schools by the time I was in seventh grade. For children who move frequently in childhood, this may be a social class experience in itself. Some children have more difficulty adjusting to change and withdraw from making new friendships, a difficult social task, especially at critical ages. Teachers, too, may be less likely to bond with children who arrive later in the school year, are not in synchronization with the rest of the

class, and cause extra work. Many educators influenced by critical theory believe

education is one of the primary methods of socializing children into social class roles.

Access to Resources

> *When people had more than enough money ... there were very clear*
> *boundaries between the haves and the have nots.   people who live in huge*
> *houses and...have, you know, Mercedes...houses, cars, clothing, what they*
> *do in the summer and vacations...the Adirondacks...Aspen... uhm, you*
> *know,...that gulf...and you would say they were upper class.*

Participants in this study were clear who were the "haves" and who were the "have

nots." The key to the distinction was access to resources, both material and other kinds

of resources. Many resources were mentioned including houses, cars, jobs, types of

income such as pensions, inheritance, vacations, education, health car, etc. In this section

I will focus on those resources that were most frequently mentioned: time, work, health

and dental care, housing and geography, and most often mentioned, education.

As this next participant suggested, oftentimes it is those who are denied access to

resources or have fewer resources that are most cognizant of that lack.

> *because [women] are the minority in terms of resources,...all minorities*
> *tend to focus more on, you know, what they don't have. We don't have*
> *equal access...so we're more aware of it just like African Americans don't*
> *have equal access so they're more aware of it. People who are really*
> *poor don't have equal access so they're more aware of the differential.*

People who have privileged access to resources are more often aware of the privilege

they believe they lack of privilege rather than the privilege they have. Many people who

have access to health or dental care assume that everyone in the U. S. has this access.

Others assume everyone owns some kind of car. Teachers often assume that "good"

parents can afford money for field trips, or special notebooks. Those of us who have

more privileged access to resources that others are often oblivious to the unrelenting

psychological impact and daily reminders of living on the margins in a highly privileged

society. One participant shared the lack of awareness and compassion the more privileged part of his family displayed towards the other disadvantaged part of his family.

> The remarks on this side of the family to that side of the family were always, "Oh, they're so poor. ...Why do they feel so disempowered by life?"

This one side of the family assumed that the disempowerment and poverty stems from within the other family relations rather than being a normal reaction to injustice and struggle similar to the mythical culture of poverty. The moral/psychological focus is those who are victimized by power rather than those who benefit from power/access.

Time

In one of the focus groups, the issue of *time* as a resource came up, resulting in some very interesting perspectives. One participant commented on friends whom she felt were more focused on the quality of time in their lives, how satisfying their work was, rather than the quantity or amount of time they spent.

> There are folks that are friends of mine who genuinely love what they do, I mean, ... the time is not as much the issue in their lives as the way that it is spent and the satisfaction that derives from it.

Another participant challenged her on this privileged, social class view.

> My hermeneutical suspicion would be that they have some pretty serious social class if that's the experience that they are having in the world right now ...Only people who have a certain level of social class are having the freedom ... to have that experience of life.

This same participant commented on the irony that people with a "higher economic class" still experience a "felt sense" they "do not have time."

> The irony, then, is people...have higher economic class than I do still feel they have no time...there's this level...where you're supposed to be busy. That's...part of some people's definition of success. Maybe poor folk don't have much discretionary time at all, that it's not a choice but it's interesting how on the other end of it, you get the same phenomenon going where these people's felt sense is that they do not have time.

Another participant suggested that this experience might be cultural and contrasted his experience in Europe with the U.S. where "we [in the U.S] had far more but we had less time than [Europeans] did."

> *How does culture impact our definition of class but also the mediating factor in terms of free amount of time? ...in Europe I'm aware of the pace being somewhat different or my experience of families there, my relatives, has always been one of them being a more leisurely life, their workday was a lot shorter, they took the time off in the day to have the dinner and then the siesta or whatever you want to call it, uhm, so it felt like they had a greater sense of leisure time but if you compare to a level of materialism to ours, we had far more but we had less time than they did.*

Class markers of "success" as evidenced by "busyness" seems to be characteristic of middle class or upper-middle class life. Ironically, the "speed-up" that was traded by middle management to the working-class in exchange for the eight hour day at the turn of the twentieth century seems to have caught up with the middle and upper-middle classes. As the first participant points out, working-class people do not have much choice about discretionary time. In order to make a wage that is about the poverty line, many working-class folks need at least two paychecks in every household to survive. Many others work a significant overtime hours as well as holding down more than one job to make what is termed a livable wage, covering basic survival expenses and a few luxury items.

Many middle and upper-middle class people do have a choice. If these more privileged classes want to "get ahead, " keep climbing the ladder, and keep up with the Jones' rather than slip behind, they probably are pressured to work hours that previously were considered discretionary or leisure hours. Even for those who might work no more than forty hours a week, a significant number of hours are being spent in commuter travel, especially by those who work in large cities, live in the suburbs, and choose to commute in another class marker, a private automobile.

> *economically disadvantaged folks…may have all the time in the world but*
> *do they want it? …would they rather really be doing something else…?*

The group did not discuss what was meant by "rather really be doing something else."

Perhaps there was an assumption the "economically disadvantaged" would rather have a

higher income or a higher status job. Or was the assumption that "economically

disadvantaged folks" are "disadvantaged" because they are un-or under-employed?

While too many working-class people are without adequately compensated work, other

folks work at least forty hours a week and sometimes two jobs and still don't have as my

father used to say, "two extra nickels to rub together." Barbara Enhrenrich reported on

her personal experience of this in her book, *Nickled and Dimed* (2001).

Work

Closely tied to the issue of time, a number of participants talked about social class and

work especially mentioning jobs, occupations, earnings and job benefits. At least thirteen

occupations were mentioned by participants in this study. Many were mentioned as if

they were class markers, i.e., they indicated a particular social class. I also found it

interesting that I found myself using the class markers "job" or "occupation" versus

"career" or "profession" when I was initially coding these different types of work.

Using the class marker "real service workers," this participant differentiated between

this group of workers who had no benefits including no retirement or health insurance

and "people like us" whose "comfortable middle-class income" was often dependent on

these service workers.

> *the whole service-oriented economy makes two levels: one kind of people*
> *like us, who might have access to a, you know, a comfortable middle-class*
> *income, but it's dependent on others versus, you know, the real service*
> *workers that they seem to be trying to make more and more in this country*
> *with no benefits. They may get an income but if you lose it, you're out,*
> *you know, with nothing: no retirement, no health insurance, nothing.*

One of the assumptions this participant made was that all the other focus group members might have access to a middle class income. I know it was not true of me and I believe that was also true of at least one other group participant.

This next participant compared what used to be different lifestyles in Australia as compared to the United States…"no matter where people worked" people received benefits including health care, a child care allowance for parents and a pension. This helped "level" social class differences, creating more of a balance between people's leisure and earning money, a balance not often found in the U.S.

> Your leisure and your enjoyment was as important as your earnings. there didn't seem to be much of a overt social class as there is here, people who had money or didn't have money. Uhm, you would find people of 55 retiring irregardless of their wealth because of…superanuation there which is everyone gets a pension no matter where they've worked and the government subsidizes your income so there's no blatant poverty. And health care is covered and there's a child care allowance that's money in your pocket. So, there's a bit of a leveling …of social class

Several participants in previous quotes mentioned the pressure to both survive and try to get ahead through hard work. At least one participant had alluded to her father's premature death due to his struggles. Earlier in this section a participant had recalled a friend's dilemma to provide a secure future for his family even if it meant not physically being there for his children. Many working-class families have experienced especially fathers but also mothers who worked long hard hours at one job but often had second jobs to make ends meet. Families often depend on overtime pay to meet the bills. More middle and upper-middle class families are working more than forty hours and often adding commuting hours. Many people take jobs to meet the bills and work towards a secure financial future rather than taking financially riskier work that they would love.

The premature death of his father caused this participant's husband to choose work that provided the security for his family his father was unable to provide. Now he was choosing to leave his job for work "he loves," a "huge" change for him.

> *that's a big change that he's making about changing from being in insurance to doing [work] he loves. It's huge for him. ...it took him to be a dad, and being really solid being a father which he kind of missed out with his dad and now [his son] is going to be eleven next year, so there's something about all that, uhm, that...will allow him leave his job and do what he loves to do, but, uhm, you know, it's all connected with the income, security, uhm, how you see yourself .... Yeah, real big, real big.*

Breadwinners, both male and female, can find themselves without many options and without the financial and emotional support to leave work they hate, especially if they provide the sole paycheck for the family. Several people that I have worked with who find themselves in this position have felt that only death and illness – physical and mental- could liberate them from this burden.

Sweet Honey in the Rock (1983), an African American women's choral group sang about the "job benefits" many working-class families experience in their lifetimes and "bring home" to their families: "*We bring home more than a paycheck, to our loved ones and families*" These "benefits" included illness, disability and even unnecessary and premature death as a result of hazardous working-conditions. This was mentioned only a few times in this study, less than it appears in the literature. Perhaps because of our "professional" status, the focus group conversations did not wander in that direction. Work hazards often came up in the "working-class" course that I taught. In my family, four of us have had work-related physical injuries that have been at times disabling or effected occupational choices. Many working-class people have no or inadequate insurance coverage and lose the little they have when injured. Medical injury often is too difficult to prove. People who have been taught to be strong and endure pain as part of

their lives often do not report injuries when they happen and delay seeing a physician because of the expense. This delay frequently voids legitimate compensation.

For many working-class people, work that is very physical and arduous, that might be dangerous, that is repetitive, that is done under constant and demeaning surveillance, that does not have much societal status, such work does not define who people are. I have noticed a difference between how in my family we were taught to define work and how dominant society views work. On one hand, we were taught, "an honest day's work for an honest day's pay." We were taught to take pride in our work, to work hard, to show we could do our work without surveillance, and to do quality work *if the pay and the working conditions were reasonable.* On the other hand, we were taught that family was more important, *family came first.* While you had to work to survive, when "push came to shove," it would be family that was there for you.

As I have become a "professional," especially when I was on salary working for others, there has been tremendous pressure to put my work identity before my family identity. I felt this more twenty years ago when women were often not regarded as "serious" and "committed" professionals if we were married and especially if we had families. I have fallen prey to this hook many times. Middle and upper middle class job risks may be emotional, psychological and spiritual rather than physical. There has been little research how even more privileged classes work stress contributes to health conditions such as heart attacks, cancer, and substance abuse. However, work health benefits for these groups frequently include both mental and physical insurance coverage, which allow some access to professional help to address these influences. Many upper middle class families have access to legal advice to better protect their health and their

futures. This is unavailable to the working-class worker. Job stress on the worker and significant others can be costly to all relationships, regardless of social class.

Health/ dental care

In the section on social identity and its interaction with other aspects of identity, participants pointed out the impact of chronic and acute illnesses on people's social class identity. People mentioned by participants often had access to health care. Several participants pointed out the limitations in access for many groups of people. This participant discussed the impact on the working-class elderly

> *When I teach my undergraduate class on, uhm, on gerontology, we talk about ...you know, there are four levels you have, upper, middle, working or lower class. ... it's all about access to, power to, health care. ... if say I'm in a working class job because I'm Mexican-American and I'm working hard labor all my life and I turn sixty-five and I have a number of physical problems related to the work that I have done all my life. And I have limited access to health care, a lower pension, reducing Medicare/Medicaid.... And in the end what usually happens, I'll die sooner. That, that's the bottom line and I'll probably die with more complications and less likely to be in my own home.*

This participant compared this with the experience of health care and dying in the book *Tuesday's at Morrie's.* Morrie, an elderly man who was dying, had nursing care in his home, and was able to host family and friends who came to be with him. He concluded *"...life experience is really linked to class."*

Another participant commented on his increased awareness regarding the connection between dental care and social class in the United States after it was brought to his attention by another person. Teeth thus become class markers.

> *I don't know how I heard it or read it ...that, uhm, you can tell the class into which a person is born or raised by looking at their teeth and that's a really interesting idea. I began to look and that's very noticeable.*

Many people do not have any or inadequate dental care. A very common practice is for more disadvantaged people to have their teeth pulled on the suggestion of their dentists because the dentist knows they cannot pay for more restorative work. Those who manage to buy partial or full dental plates often do not wear them because they are inferior workmanship, or poorly fitted by dental workers who do not "waste" compassion or patience on "lower class" people who do not have regular dental treatment. I have been outraged by highly recommended dentists who subject financially struggling patients to written literature and moral lectures while under the drill about "not caring" enough about their teeth to get timely dental care. These are the same dentists who refused to see patients on a reduced basis after phone calls to more than twenty dental offices in my community for client's and my own family's dental care.

Housing and geography

One of the most visible markers of social class in the United States is people's housing and its location. Working with Habitat for Humanity in this country and Central America helping people with very limited incomes built their own houses and working with the Catholic Worker movement feeding those who are homeless has opened my eyes to the central importance of housing in people's lives. Decent housing makes a significant difference in terms of physical and mental health in people's lives.

This became even clearer for me when I lived with my family in a village in Nicaragua. I saw the immediate and long-term damage that a hurricane can cause in a family's social class. I experienced living with a dirt floor after a flood filled our shack with water almost to the rafters, leaving behind devastation and inches of mud on our floors that took weeks to remove. I never realized that lodging with mud floors "rained" on the inside when the humidity was too high. We lived for three years without indoor

plumbing and running water in the best house in the village. We had the luxury of a couple of light fixtures in the ceiling and a couple of outlets in the walls. Electricity was infrequent and water needed to be hauled and purified.

Many of us have heard these kinds of stories from our grandparents and great-grandparents as this next participant shared, reminders of yesteryear or strange places.

> *My grandmother didn't have a bathroom, indoor plumbing until my dad came along and plumbed their house. And when they died, they still didn't have heat or air, they ran with a fireplace and opened the windows....*

There are far too many people living in many of our communities for whom this is a daily reality today. This is difficult to both remember and fathom when many are constructing huge houses with thousands of square feet. The bigger, the better seems to be the motto for so many status symbols or class markers. As one participant exclaimed about the house of his childhood friend who had grown up in his working-class neighborhood:

> *If you took the roof off of our house, it would fit in his basement, literally, with lots of room to walk around outside.*

Another participant, musing on her comfortable although not "big" house now, shared the different meaning a "huge" house had for her as a young, African American girl when any larger home was out of bounds for blacks because of racism. Thus, types of housing had racist as well as classist connotations.

> *I have a house that's larger than a lot of the houses that looked larger than life to me as a kid because...no matter how much money you had as a black person, you were not back then going to own any of these houses. Uhm, and...sometimes I drive up to my house (laughing) and I smile, ... you know, this is not a big house now (laughs) but it was huge as a little girl. ... probably knowing that it was out of the means of blacks...but not understanding, I mean, at some level understanding, that it was racism ....*

Many participants described their own or relatives living in housing that had class connotations: trailer, mansion, row house, farmhouse, beautiful home, apartment, nice

house with no furniture, big house, etc. One participant described her grandparents as migrant farmers, creating a picture in my mind of temporary, run-down housing owned by the grower. As a teenager, I worked with Mexican farm workers who labored in the orange groves and truck farms of Central Florida. I know how rat-infested, dangerous and exposed to the elements this housing often is. Many participants also described their neighborhoods using class-coded language such as "nice," "bad," "better," "good," etc. These adjectives can often have racist and ethnic-prejudice coded meaning as well.

Participants also make distinctions between types of municipalities and the assumptions about the social position of those who lived there. Practices of red-lining or housing discrimination especially against people of color, who have disabilities or who are impoverished (as well as more individually against gay/lesbians who are "out") have also impacted the geographic location of these groups.

> *If you live in the city, you don't need a car, so, that's a huge expense that people outside the city have, uhm, which can afford you to live in the city cause it's so much more expensive.*

This following quote is a wonderful illustration of the changing racial/ethnicity of a neighborhood as groups gain more access and opportunities to employment which allows families to seek "better" housing and schools. Unfortunately, because of classism, ethnocentrism and racism, "moving up" often means "moving out" to another location, often draining the community of valuable resources which could provide employment, education, and health care. For those families of the same racial/ethnic groups that left who cannot "escape" and are "left behind," resentment and stereotyped fear often spills over in racism as we see in this next quote. Many families like this next participant's manage to "get ahead" by buying large family homes and renting out floors or carving up the home into separate units. Often it is the more desirable parts of the house that are

rented. This quote also exposes the fantasies of those in the neighborhood about the status and quality of life of those who are leaving.

> *When my parents moved from a neighborhood that was Italian-American to a neighborhood that was changing its nationality, Irish-American, that's when we bought our family house. We became the landlords of the house. The tenants on the first floor were white. ...I remember my parents...talking about how angry their tenants were...that they were now living in this house owned by blacks. But the perception was that people who were able to live outside of the city in the suburbs, someone who was a laborer...had money. They had the means, they had the resources, they had a luxury life, I mean, all kinds of fantasies about what that was like.*

Valuable human and natural resources are often unfairly allocated to one part of a community, city, region, state, or nation. This is oftentimes legitimated by tying education and other services to the tax base of the particular area. This causes enormous differences in the opportunities and quality of life of the local inhabitants. The students who attend school on the west side of my university town have per student budgets of one and a half the rate allotted to students who live on the east side of town where my children lived and attended school. This participant from mainland China described how urban residents were more privileged in her country, often getting benefits such as education that rural residents were not. She described this as "what separates people."

> *I come from...mainland China, and when was a young child, we were all very poor, everyone was starving. There is a difference between the rural resident and the urban resident. As an urban resident...we were the privileged of groups...in my country's position. [Urban dwellers] have more resources for education ... and they receive certain benefits from the municipal government .... Yes, so that's what separates people ....*

Although there is a enormous poverty in most U.S. cities, the greatest percentage of poverty today exists in the rural South, an area often are neglected, ignored or given token amounts in the allocation of state and federal resources (Jones, 1998).

Education

> For upward mobility does, indeed, depend largely upon at least a college education…. (Rubin, 1976, p.208)
>
> *I was the only one in my family thus far that has ever gotten a college degree of any sort, going as far as you can go in any direction.*
>
> *From my family, uhm, education was always very important …. Money can go and come but if you're, if you are educated, it gives you a certain competence that can't be taken away from you.*

Not surprisingly, education was mentioned frequently in this study. Whatever their backgrounds, all the participants were either pursing an advanced degree or already had one in addition to having or preparing for a profession in family therapy/education. Participants had the additional privilege and possibilities for upward mobility that came with graduate education in general. Not all participants would automatically financially benefit from their degree, but rather that more doors might be opened than if they had not pursued advanced formal education. Even with the latter's four years advantage in the job market, college graduates make at least fifty percent more than most high school graduates in their first jobs (Rubin, 1976). Many will make significantly more.

Not everyone believes, however, that education is equally an opportunity for upward mobility for all social classes. Children of working-class families even with a degree from a four year college often are tracked into work that pays less than their middle and upper middle class peers (Rubin, 1976). Many American educators who have studied social class (Giroux, 1995; Kozol, 1988; 1996; Linkon, 1999) suggested that daily educational decisions made by administrators and teachers often reinforce the social class status quo of students in their schools. As Lillian Rubin (1976) wrote:

> Greer (1972), confronting the persistent American myth that schools are the primary agency of upward mobility, argues that the real achievement of the schools in America has been their ability to train children to accept

the prevailing class structure and their fate as workers in the industrial system.

Working with families from a variety of social classes, it has been my experience that when a child consistently misbehaves in school, children from working-class backgrounds are more likely to be tracked into emotionally handicapped programs or alternative schools than children from higher socially classes. This occurs even more quickly with children of color from working-class backgrounds.

Perhaps experiencing inequality in education, not all families value higher education. This participant differentiated between his mother's and his father's household's opinions – each from different class backgrounds - about going to college.

> *In my mother's household with my stepfather I would say we were very*
> *working class. I remember ... distinct messages about education, that no*
> *one should go to college unless they won a scholarship .... Whereas in my*
> *father's household, you know, he was a lawyer and educated and there*
> *was an expectation that you would get an education ....*

For working-class families, the financial and other sacrifices to support a child going to college can be too "costly." Bell hooks (2000)in *Class Matters* recalled even with a scholarship, her mother's concerns about the associated college expenses such as books, clothing and transportation. Like my father, her mother tried to convince her to go to school locally in spite of her scholarship. Many working-class families realize that such financial aid takes their children out of the financial range of parental protection. If something happens to the child, working-class parents might not have the money or connections to offer the child the same protections that were previously extended.

In spite of the worries and fears, for many working-class and other families who do have someone complete a college or advanced degree, there is a great deal of pride and

accomplishment not only for the individual but for the family as well. As this next

participant explained:

> There's a lot of meaning in our family, too, tied up with educational
> attainment because ... no one has ever had before either. ...I know for me,
> definitely something that is real emotional about that....

A degree on the wall was perceived as a special family gift by this next participant as

she noted that some family members were "lucky to get past the sixth grade." She felt

that some families members did not appreciate the opportunity of a college education.

> I am the second to get a post undergrad degree out of both sides. I
> noticed that my aunts and uncles who have done a little bit better than my
> parents, sent their kids off to college and they didn't even finish their
> degrees. ...my first thought was, well, it wasn't even important enough for
> you to finish your degree and what a gift this is...no one has anything
> hanging on their wall. They were lucky to get past the sixth grade.

Even for families that support a college education, an advanced degree may seen

unnecessary at best and even ludicrous. This participant said a college education was

"assumed" and paid for by her father for she and her brother. Yet, an advanced degree

was unthinkable because her father's siblings had not even gone to college.

> It was always assumed that my brother and I would go to college.... And
> [my father] worked towards that and...set aside money and paid for my
> brother's college and then he died and I got money which paid for my
> college...I don't think he would have wanted me to go further, uhm,
> because what's the point...none of his brothers or sisters went to college.

This participant's family thought a college degree was "great" but an advanced degree

was "a little bit nuts." Her grandmother worried about debt and a lack of "real" jobs,

creating misunderstanding and disrespect for something so "groundbreaking."

> [My grandmother] could not equate my staving off a real job and getting
> myself in debt for a job that she couldn't see how it was ever really going
> to payoff for me. . . . you're doing something that is so groundbreaking
> and at that same time, not quite really understood or even disrespected.
> The four year degree, everyone thinks that's great; and then they start
> thinking you're a little bit nuts. "Well, what do you want to do that for?"

Participants who were working-class struggled with their own ambivalence about pursuing an advanced degree, especially a doctorate. One participant challenged that the Ph.D. was a "luxury" and acknowledged that her particular working-class culture was influential in her viewpoint.

> *My thing about the Ph.D. is that it's a luxury . . . . I guess, there's some of my culture that never leaves me no matter what happens ....*

The status of education varies with families and cultures. While education is highly valued by many U.S. families, it appears that it has greater status in other countries. Asian participants in particular mentioned the importance of education in their cultures. This next participant from India perceived that education was more highly valued in her country than in the United States. She ranked it more important than "having security or having bank balance" in contrast to the higher value given both here.

> *it's got more status in India, at least you are willing to kind of, uhm, put that as a priority more than having security or having bank balance. You are going to get education, not because it's going to get you a better income but it's going to give you better prestige in the society . . . . I don't think that is how it is associated in the U.S.*

From another country, this next participant echoed the status accorded to her entrance into the doctoral program. When visiting family "back home," she was treated very differently, not a desirable change in status for her.

> *In Asia education is important. I went back home to my aunt's house and to my uncle's home and they treated me differently. They don't even let me do the dishes or help with meal preparation. I was trying to help but "No, no, no ." I can feel the difference . . . although I don't like that. There are a lot of assumptions like you are doing Ph.D. you are going to be rich.*

This participant experienced her U.S. family's pride but was not treated differently.

> *my family perspective of me didn't change very much when I got my degree . They were very proud but it didn't change . . . . Now in the doctoral program, uhm, my family still bosses me around.*

For a third Asian participant from South Korea, educational status created a lot of pressure as she and a cousin competed throughout school. Although this participant did better academically, the cousin surprised everyone by getting her doctorate first. The pressure was now on this participant to finish her doctorate.

> *there's a lot of that pressure . . . . I'm the oldest, yeah, but like one of my cousins, we're the same age and she got her Ph.D. first which like, shocked the whole family because . . . grade wise, I was better. We competed in high school and college and she went right into the Master's/Ph.D. program and . . . got her doctorate first. So I have that little pressure, you know, like I need to get it so she won't be the only one.*

People resources

Those who are more privileged to have access to resources such as time, work, health/dental care, housing/location and education often have the ability to protect themselves from experiences, from people and even from unwanted access, for example, by government agencies. Joanna Kadi in *Thinking Class* discusses the vulnerability of the working-classes, that while they don't have access, others have more privileged access to them and they often to not have the money or position to protect themselves from this intrusion. Many working-class families have less of an illusion of protection and security about their lives than other more privileged families.

Working-class families, however, may learn to rely on their people resources more than those who have more privilege, as one participant pointed out regarding some families reaction to death, for example.

> *When there's not money, people use their resources in terms of each other more . . . you should see [name]'s family rally around death. It's really incredible, what they do for people when somebody's dying or sick, [name] writes these incredible letters to people who have relatives that have died . . . he'll go to wakes of people that he barely knows. He will write letters to people about different things. They know how to do death.*

This may come with a cost of time, sharing of meager resources, resulting in more financial and other sacrifices and fewer available choices. It also may foster, however, resourcefulness, pride, patience, perseverance, compassion humility and generosity. My mother often recalled the support and help of our trailer park neighbors when she was left without grocery money or resources to buy fuel, clothing or medicine. I recall as a child being picked up and carried by a neighbor's boyfriend and driven to a hospital after being ill for an extended period when my father on a work trip with the family's only transportation. The same man brought my mother and I home after hours of waiting and may have even paid for the medicine and medical care. I remember the outpouring of support from other neighbors as a neighbor's family and several of my siblings who were spending the night almost died of carbon monoxide poisoning after a gas heater malfunctioned. Such resiliency and strength of character is often overlooked by those from more privileged classes who do not take the time to unearth these stories of resourcefulness. It is a delicate balance to both not romanticize the life struggles of people who do not have access to adequate material resources while at the same time recognizing and honoring the "people" resources that are often invisible.

Exposure to Different Classes

How do we become more sensitive to other people's social class experiences and "see" those gifts that are often invisible to those outside a social class? Quite a few participants in this study talked about college as an experience that exposed them to social class experiences different from their own. Many of these participants had gone to colleges outside of their local areas. College attendance, especially outside of one's geographic area, is an experience of privilege, beyond the financial means of working-class families. A few are fortunate enough to have the right combinations of family

support, educational savvy, connections, athletic or musical ability to win the financial assistance necessary to make this a reality. Very few schools meet a family's financial need. Yet the few who do provide some diversity to a college experience. Several participants talked about never realizing their own class of origin until college.

> *It's still very jumbled when I try to think of class. Growing up, I was, described myself, as middle class, as did all my friends but if I really think about it, I wasn't middle class. I was at best lower middle, uhm. And I'm just, I'm remembering things, you know, like . . . when I was a undergraduate and I had a girlfriend who came to visit me and . . . afterwards, I realized that my mother had gone out and bought a whole new set of dishes to have when this woman came.*

Very often, "lower middle class" or working-class folks do not have the "Better Homes and Gardens" that are considered essential for a middle class lifestyle. With limited finances, families "make do" with what they have. This is tough when outsiders come to visit, especially if they are perceived to be from a higher class. When my brother's girlfriend who attended the local college came to visit, my mother quickly recruited my grandmother to help make matching curtains for the windows and door-less closet and a throw for our day-bed couch in our walk-through family room. It was fine for us or extended family but we had to make a good impression for company.

Before television became normative, children who grew up in a similar class neighborhood, attended neighborhood schools, and had extended family from the same social class, could be protected from the awareness of differing social class experiences. Children who did not have basic food, shelter and health care, did not have the luxury or privilege of this experience. College can shatter images of what is considered poverty.

> *I came from a family in retrospect could be considered lower class . . . . Neither of my parents had a high school education. We lived in a row house. I don't think either of my parents' siblings had a high school education, or had graduated from high school. I never thought of either of my parents as being any less than anybody else who had a high school or*

> even college degree when I was in school. But I didn't recognize kind of where we fit in the social strata, or the economic strata, I should say, uhm, until I was applying for uhm, college and you had to fill out financial aid applications and found out that we fell below the poverty level.

Being raised in a working-class neighborhood and probably, going to a working-class school also insulated her from awareness of her family's position on the hierarchy. I wonder if she were also aware of people who were financially struggling more than her.

This person's experience made me aware of another class difference. Children in families that are financially disadvantaged who want help to go to college have to fill out financial aid forms that disclose information from their parents' income tax. While some parents in more affluent families may choose whether to disclose that information to their children or school officials, these struggling parents do not have that choice. While it is still possible for these parents to initially fill out these forms themselves and then just have their children sign it, usually copies are sent back to the student to have them verify the information. This is could be seen as one more invasion of privacy of working-class and some middle-class families. Many working-class adolescents already have some sense of how much their parents make. Since there often are not additional assets in these families– savings, inheritance, investment, etc., knowing their parents' salaries gives them an awareness of their parents' financial situation.

Another participant grew up in an upper middle class neighborhood. He sensed that his parents would say they were middle class because they lived in a smaller house, and as he put it, didn't try to keep up with the Jones. Only during college did he realize how privileged his family was, that they, too, were upper middle class.

> When I was growing up I had no concept of how much money we actually had. My parents were always very frugal and I had no idea how much money my dad was making. It wasn't . . . until I was in college helping my

> *dad figure out taxes that I even had a clue about how much he was making, and said, "Why are we not spending this?" (laughs), you know?*

Other participants talked about learning about other social class and cultural perspectives from new experiences they encountered in college.

> *And I remember coming to college . . . where I really got an experience with different social classes, and uhm, experiencing the food as more the gourmet foods, or even foods from the health food store, etc. that I had never experienced before. I really liked it. Growing up, we didn't ever see any of that. It was interesting for me to broaden my perspective . . . .*

Some people learn about different social classes by living with others, especially intimate partners. When two people live together, making decisions as a couple, sharing finances, social class issues frequently come up. This participant talked about his childhood of privilege and how this gave him a feeling of safety his wife never had.

> *I didn't know what social class was until I was in high school; that speaks of privilege. Uhm, I would say we were probably upper middle class. . . . But I had a choice of going into a job I wanted because I didn't have to worry about paying for school. My wife's dad was unemployed for long, long periods of time in her life. Her mom finished school one semester short of having a bachelor's degree. So, she had two jobs . . . We just see money, the house, through such different lenses. I have this privileged feeling of safety . . . I don't think she ever will.*

He then described how their differing financial experiences caused them to have different perspectives about taking out Christmas loans. To his credit, this led to a further awareness of his own privileged vantagepoint.

> *Our first winter . . . her parents took out a loan for Christmas money. It was the most irresponsible thing I'd ever heard and said, "Why would any body do that? It's so undisciplined." And I heard her telling me, "They don't have any money in their bank account." How embarrassing!*

Exposure to other people's social class experiences is a privilege, one often taken for granted, feared and even rejected. Those who are privileged by education and money to choose to live in proximity to those who have different social class experiences have the

opportunity to see the world from the perspectives of others, exposing those aspects that have been hidden or denied from our own experiences. In trying to share our experiences with someone outside our social class, we are given a unique opportunity to step back and observe our own experiences from a fresh perspective, exposing hidden blind areas, and understanding and valuing those aspects that we have long taken for granted. Others are forced to be exposed to social class experiences that are different than one's own. As one participant commented earlier in this chapter, we often seek out those and are most comfortable with those who are most similar to ourselves. It is not unusual to be fearful of and uncomfortable with perspectives, experiences and values that are different from and might threaten our own understanding of the world. Those who embrace this opportunity not only have access to new experiences but may come away with greater insight into our own complex identities and with increased awareness and resources to live in this complex and diverse world.

In this chapter social class grounded in the research participants' experiences as well as the literature and my own social class experiences were explored. In the first section, I discussed my philosophy of research engagement as well as a brief overview of social class using participants; first words: money, power/privilege, and social ranking. In the second section, the taboo against direct, open, social class conversation was explored. In the third section, the complexity of social class identity was discussed including subaltern aspects, our relationship to significant others as well the interplay of status and social mobility. In the fourth section, the influence of privileged access to material resources, the invalidation of people and personal resources, the importance and privilege of

exposure to social class experiences beyond one's own was presented. In this last section, the implications this has for family therapy education will be explored.

Discussion

Discussing social class arouses feelings, exposes power and privilege, weakens the collective beliefs systems that support inequality, and raises awareness of the replication of social stratification in everyday life contexts. Talking about social class exorcises the taboo of social class, releasing individual and collective power to name the oppression, expose the oppression and exploitation, and use power for solutions or for inoculations against internalizing negative messages that are beyond control to change.

Privilege

Privilege is relative. It is rare for people to compare their privilege with those who have less; the dominant becomes the standard of evaluation and the goal. To draw one's attention from the coveted prize of privilege and examine one's privilege relative to those who do not have as much access risks the possibility of cognitive and emotional dissonance with the status quo and is therefore subtly discouraged.

Class markers mark the territory and privileges of each class. These are subtle messages that warn against trespassing. Social rules are in place to be used if necessary to keep people who are deviant or "undisciplined" in line. Potential members are considered deserving to the degree that they become willing to follow the social norms, jump through the ranking hoops with a minimum of complaining or "whining" and do not challenge the system in a threatening manner.

Guests do not control access to privileges; these are loaned. Emerging members who struggle to "earn" an invitation by gatekeepers to take on the mantle of privilege are

expected to conform to the social rules to be part of the club. They are enjoined to an implicit oath of silence to ignore the obvious like inequalities of privilege or the emperor having no clothes. The sanctions imposed for those who trespass against this rule include evaluation, name calling (labeling), lessening of privilege, a denial of access, and expulsion from membership. Only the more privileged can invoke social class rules, e.g. putting someone in their place and reminding guest members about transgressions and the potential consequences. These rules can be bent or ignored for people who are favored and sheltered by the powers that be.

Conversations happen at the end of the spectrum where privilege is denied and power is stripped. In education, people are surrounded by the expectation that either one comes from the social class that bestows privilege or is committed to uphold the social norms in order to be granted privilege. The risk to openly challenge this discourse is significant. Education therefore often functions as a gatekeeper to discourage and silence these conversations about social class. Education without reflection can be oppressive, crushing personal power and stopping legitimate privilege for denying access to the privileges bestowed with education, creating a vulnerability to exploitation.

Silence, Safety and Responsibility

When participants suggest that there are "layers they won't penetrate" this not only refers to the internalized oppression and pain from resisted oppression but also the realization that it is often unsafe to risk exposing authentic thoughts and feelings. Silence is further encouraged by a simplistic, decontextualized social class analysis and a lack of genuine interest as evidenced by a lack of inquiry. This results in unquestioned assumptions and blindness by those who are in positions of expertise including essentializing, stereotyping and pathologizing people's experiences. There is danger of

ascribing more worth to those behaviors, values, qualities, etc. associated with upper class behavior. Internalizing classism is class discrimination ingested not just imposed. If the imposition stops long enough, classism will eventually stop being internalized.

People need time to share their stories about social class and to let their social class issues unfold. A one time or rushed session is not sufficient. People's lack of trust to expose their thoughts and feelings needs to be honored. There is an invitation and encouragement to share rather than a requirement although there might be times that a student/professor might be expected to get more counseling in this area if it is negatively impacting counseling/supervision experiences.

Creating a safe climate to discuss social class includes creating an environment where people who have been socialized to blindness are not attacked for respectfully risking, exposing, and exploring their ignorance and working through their blindness and guilt. Those who have been oppressed also need the same rules of safety to work through their rage and shame while challenging but not attacking others.

Those who have been oppressed must not take responsibility for protecting or rescuing people from the consequences of their ignorance. Denials of responsibility by the privileged who have colluded with oppression or supporting expectations that the marginalized carry responsibility for oppression does not facilitate dialogue. Attacking people who are genuinely trying to explore and embrace their burden of responsibility while understandable is unhelpful and does not promote dialogue.

Implications for Family Therapy Education

People construct their ideas about social class grounded in their experiences as they share their social class stories. These memories are held in the back of people's minds and are rarely shared as a result of the taboo about social class. In externalizing

these memories and constructing stories, people have an opportunity to examine their experiences against other people's experiences and the social discourse about social class.

Family therapy programs and educators must encourage social class discussions, to bring them forth from the back of minds into voice. Programs collude with the social discourse of stifling social class conversations by: 1) not modeling social class discussions or modeling limited aspects of social class discussion, e.g. commenting only on "the poor;" 2) emphasizing helping models that indicate the "poor" need to be helped by those who have more power, including family therapists, thus giving helpers more prestige and rank; 3) ignoring displays of power by those who are marginalized or labeling this "resistance" in a pathological, negative manner; 4) encouraging those whose backgrounds are poor/working-class to identify with the privileged by pathologizing their backgrounds and extending new privileges by identification with the profession and imposing sanctions for deviations. These actions or lack of actions develop a discourse that the poor/working class are powerless, deficient, not good enough, need help and at times are ungrateful from those of us that are more powerful, good hearted, gifted, helpful and generous. Programs also silence social class conversation by assuming that students need exposure only to poor/working-class clients rather than also to middle, upper class and elite clients. All program members need exposure to a variety of cross-cultural clients so class assumptions, stereotypes, and biases are exposed and challenged.

Programs need to structure time and allocate resources to explore how elitism is replicated and classism ignored. Programs need to reflect on the ways that assume that students identify with the middle or upper class and have not experienced class discrimination. Programs must model the delicate balance of discussing social class

without privileging one type of class experience while not ignoring the power differentials and consequences of these differences for each social class.

Conversations about social class must reflect the complexity and relationality of social class identity and the diversity of social class experience. Professionals need to be aware of the distinction between social location and social identity. Programs need to be encouraged to provide multi-faceted concepts of the self rather than the classical, unitary self. In exploring social class identity, one's class of origin and other aspects of nested class identity is significant. How do issues of loyalty and belonging impact class identification? How different are one's parents and/or extended family's social class experiences within the family system? How do people's viewpoints about social mobility differ? What experiences influence those differences?

Discussions about social class need to include issues both about money yet more than about money. Exploring issues of status and American social class myths such as beliefs about who is deserving and undeserving and who is entitled to basic life resources (e.g. basic health care and decent housing) is informative. Cues about access to resources and resulting meaning and shaping of life perspectives are important to explore. What kinds of jobs, working conditions, benefits, housing, neighborhoods/regions, health/dental care, and education do people have? What meaning does this have for people and members of their family/significant others? How does this deviate from everyone's expectations? What is the lifestyles and social class identity in relations to class of origin of significant members in the family/community system? How might the differences be stressful and how are these differences interpreted? Who is ascribed responsibility and by whom?

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of supporting opportunities for people to share their social class stories that are often held in the back of their minds. By externalizing these stories, people have an opportunity to reflect on their narrative and compare their own stories with others' stories and the dominant class discourse. It is through this process of narration and reflection that people can evaluate their personally co-constructed social class beliefs. These personal narratives influence people's professional perspectives as educators and therapists. For effective cross-class therapy, Roffman suggested that social class, self of the therapist work was essential. Effective self of the therapist work depends on careful reflection on these personally constructed narratives. Chapter six, *Professional Reflections on Social Class* will explore the significance of reflection in family therapy programs both from the program as a whole as well as from people's professional roles as educators or student-therapists.

CHAPTER 6
PROFESSIONAL REFLECTIONS ON SOCIAL CLASS

In the previous chapter, *Personal Reflections on Social Class*, I explored research participants reflections about social class, how social class had influenced their lives, and the implications this had for family therapy education. In this chapter, I will explore participants' professional perspectives in three sections: profession, program, and practice through their professional roles as educators and therapists, faculty and students. In the last section I will discuss the implications, including circular, systemic reflexivity.

In the first section, the focus will be both on the profession of family therapy within the hierarchy of mental health professions as well as the comments of research participants, primarily students, on their professional identity. This section will also include reflections on the primary professional association with the American Association for Marital and Family Therapy (AAMFT). The second section will focus on social class issues and ranking within the family therapy programs. This second section will also include the overall philosophy and social class discourse, classism, and resistance within the programs. The third section will focus on the practice of family therapy: supervision and therapy. The first part of this section will explore self of the therapist, class-based assumptions and class linked language. The second part will explore therapy with cross-class clients and will discuss access and accessibility, learning from and relating to cross-class clients. A summary, discussion, and implications, including the need for circular, systemic reflexivity, will conclude the chapter.

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Profession

Social Class in the Mental Health Professions

Marriage and family therapists, often known as family therapists, are only one discipline within a group of professionals that work with issues of mental health. As we discussed issues of social class and ranking, in general and within the profession, many participants brought up the ranking system within mental health practice.

Mental health hierarchy

> *When we look at class, uhm, there is a hierarchy: the medical doctor, you know, psychiatrist who's in marriage and family therapy, uhm, is put on the pedestal and then someone who maybe crossed over from psychology. That may be changing now because we kind of have somebody that is pure marriage and family therapist. It's kind of interesting where we fit in . . . .*

Students in particular commented on social class within family therapy as well as remarking on a hierarchy of mental health practitioners. This next student underscored this, commenting on which professionals were paid the most and seeing social workers as being embedded in "the biggest piece of the lower class pie." Family therapists are considered "upstarts" and not explicitly located in that hierarchical structure.

> *Psychiatrists get paid the most . . . and then there are psychologists who get to do a lot of the testing, they get paid a little bit less than the doctors who prescribe the meds, then you have the social workers who are really entrenched . . . in these systems and they have the biggest piece of the lower class pie and then you have the sort of MFT upstarts.*

Mental health counselors were not situated in the hierarchy. When I asked for clarification about the term "mental health counselor," these two students had differing ideas. One student understood it as an overarching term for a mental health professional.

> *that's just like a part of counseling so that's sort of aping everything, sort of like a psychologist. If you're working, it . . . becomes the umbrella term for a health care professional . . . .*

Another student disagreed and indicated that this term made a distinction between other professionals and a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist who were "a step above."

> *I'm looking through on-line newspapers now, and a lot of the positions are asking for mental health counselors, counseling trainees, or therapists . . . and when they want, uhm, psychologists, they very clearly state, "licensed psychologist, licensed psychiatrist." So, they're, they're a step above.*

Most students differentiated between psychiatrists, psychologists and "other" mental health professionals. There was some disagreement in the hierarchical arrangement in the placement of these latter professionals. Mental health counselors were often not mentioned in this hierarchy, family therapists were variously placed at the top, middle or bottom of the "other category." Many, however, saw social workers at the lower end of this hierarchy, although from my perspective, they often have more privileges in states in which they have had a historical presence. I began my undergraduate work majoring in social work having initially been mentored by social workers. Although for practical reasons I completed my work in psychology, I have always had a positive image of social workers. Curious about the discrepancy between my own very high imposed status of social workers and the status accorded by many of the participants, I further explored this anomaly.

With whom and how do you work?

Several students and faculty provided an explanation for this ranking, what one student described as the "food chain." All related it to whom the professional was imaged as working with. Since many social workers worked with working-class people ("the poor," "the lower class"), their own class status was derived from these associated relationships. This next student contrasted the social distance in the image of a

psychoanalytic therapist, "the master of all knowledge," and the social worker who

worked in the homes, "with the cockroaches running across the room."

> *Within the profession you've got social class. If you have a Ph.D.*
> *psychology student, then you're at the top of the food chain . . . . if we*
> *define ourselves as psychologists, or therapists, or social workers, case*
> *managers . . . that connotes class because whatever group we're*
> *associated with effects the way we work with our clients . . . we see*
> *ourselves as on their level per se. . . . the old psychoanalytic therapist,*
> *you know, this distant figure who sits on this cloud and looks down on the*
> *poor, uhm, client there on the couch ... the master of all knowledge . . . as*
> *opposed to social work. I was in the homes, right there with people,*
> *sitting on the couches with the cockroaches running across the room.*

Parenthetically, I was curious about the image of the "old" psychoanalyst and I

wondered about the images of gender and age of both the analyst and the social worker.

Although this participant was male, many people, myself included, often image

contemporary social workers as female. How has the status and pay scale of this

particular profession changed according to the fluctuation of its associated gender

perception? How does race play into our assumptions about both professions.

This next student added *where* you work defines *how* you work so that different

settings are associated with a professional class which reflects a style of therapy.

> *depends on where you are working. If you are working in a mental*
> *institution, you are doing . . . therapy but what you construe as therapy*
> *will be different: the recommendations that you make and what you do.*
> *Profession can be associated with class but it's also the way you work.*

Perhaps in some settings non-student, especially licensed therapists might have more

freedom to define their own "way of work" reflecting another characteristic of social

class within the profession, more autonomy and less surveillance/supervision,

This faculty member agreed with the perception that with *whom* ("poor people" and

"multiple systems") and *where* ("walking the streets") professionals worked as well as

what kind of work they were perceived as doing contributed to ranking. Social workers

"conjure[d]" up "case management" as opposed to family therapists who were perceived as doing "therapy, " and having a higher status.

> There is a social class among the professions. . . . you know, social work conjures up the old welfare caseworker model . . . being a marriage and family therapist, sounds, I mean, "I'm a therapist, " you know, a social worker is . . . out in the community with poor people . . . walking the streets, dealing with . . . case management, dealing with all the multiple systems. That's lower class . . . lower class people, and a lower class job.

This student who has a master's in social work perceived "therapy" as "middle class" and "casework" as "lower class," the latter associated with social work.

> the word therapy, I only associate with middle class. I associate social work with lower class. I have a master's in social work so I think of casework ... more for lower class....

Another faculty member, a licensed social worker, was concerned how students had absorbed and reflected this view about social workers. She agreed that in her state, being a licensed social worker gave "privilege and access into the (health care) system" and doesn't necessarily mean that the training is equal to the clinical training that MFT students were receiving in the program. However, she objected to the sense of a "lowly social worker" not deserving such privilege while a family therapist did. A contrast between the class-linked work setting "private practice" vs. "agencies" was also noted.

> The students are always saying, "I'm going into private practice" ... they don't want to work in agencies with clients that they perceive ... having social stigmas. They don't want to be a social worker. ... our graduates, have . . . been able to find jobs but there are some agencies the way the health care system is structured who really want to hire licensed clinicians. I agree with them . . . . This social worker is not clinically trained in the way that you are clinically trained; the license gives them privilege and access into the system. But they're upset . . . more, you know, "this lowly social worker who's in this position," is how it's coming across. And it really concerns me that they have that view.

This next student participant suggested that we "establish" our own social class and "define" ourselves " to some degree" depending on the profession and discipline we go

into. However, does everyone have equal access or choice in making these decisions or is it, to a large degree, dependent on social class of origin, race, gender, ability, region, and other contextual factors?

> *We define ourselves to some degree according to the profession that we go into. Even if we are all doing the same work, we have different licenses, we have different education, we establish, you know, our own class, to some degree, upon the discipline that we select. . . . I'm a mongrel. I have a bachelor's in psychology, my master's in social work and my Ph.D. in marriage and family therapy . . . gives me freedom because I can associate with people in any profession.*

Professional Identity in Family Therapy

The markings of a professional

Several faculty and students commented on the social assumptions that certain external signs "mark" the professional, especially clothes, skin color and sex. This faculty participant humorously described how a security guard in her building gave "all kinds of trouble" to a "young, free spirit" colleague when he came to visit wearing jeans and a hat. This attire did not meet the standards of a professional envisioned by the gatekeeper, suggesting that similar standards are often reflected in society in general.

> *One of my colleagues . . . came to visit me one day here . . . this young, free spirit came in dark jeans, tango hat on backwards and the security guard was giving Dr. [name] all kinds of trouble down there . . . automatically it was like, "Oh, my goodness, look whose coming into this building," you know? And I'm like Dr. [name] is a team professor . . . .*

A student, discussing the issue of external markers and being a professional, described an incident at a conference when she gave a workshop on in-home therapy. She and a colleague had "wonderful feedback" except for two evaluations that reflected similar "dress code" expectations regarding a "professional appearance" in spite of that being one of the points of their workshop.

> *I was very ill with food poisoning all weekend, so . . . I couldn't tolerate my ultra professional clothes, I couldn't stand to wear hose at all so I wore my combat boots, you know, under a skirt. I couldn't tolerate a heavy jacket so I wore a lightweight sweater that shows one of my tattoos. And with all this wonderful feedback I got two comments, saying, uhm, "not a professional appearance." . . . you're not in a suit . . . you're wearing too much make-up which is a class marker . . . and tattoos . . . and that's within the context of this workshop where we're trying to say, "Hey, you know, leave the power suit at home and maybe put on your blue jeans when you're going in where people are sitting in their bathrobe."*

When I asked this student participant what she thought supervisors might say about

dress codes and what constitutes a "professional appearance," she responded:

> *I'm a supervisor in training now so . . . it's really important for me to have a conversation with my supervisee and talk with them about setting expectations. . . . I'm the most conservative about how I dress in the first meeting. . . . the more I get to know people, the more, you know, I dress my own creative and fun way. . . . There are places I don't go in my dress. For doing in-home, uhm, I was very clear about choosing casual clothing, uhm, you know, nice but casual....*

What constitutes "nice but casual clothing"? How are the expectations different by

gender, race, class, region, nationality or culture in general? How does the setting or the

role within the professional discipline impact these expectations? I have seen remarkable

changes in many of these expectations in the last couple of decades. Who decides what is

most appropriate? What power do students and the consumers – the clients – have in

voicing and influencing these norms?

Another faculty participant pointed out the external markers of being a professional to

include race and gender. This black female professional shared her experiences of being

ignored by whites when she introduced herself as being Dr. so and so. Invariably, the

whites discounted her position and achievements by not returning the address when it is

likely that they would have done so to a white professional with a similar introduction.

This participant pointed out how being a woman may have also contributed to this

invalidation since it is often males and whites that are perceived as having money and professional status in society.

> *There are whites who I can say Dr. [own name]. They will not say [Dr. -- ----] back to me, and when you're a woman . . . that's race and gender . . . It has implications for how we think about class . . . in our society most often we think of men as having the money that gives the higher status in general, and you know, it's, uhm, white as opposed to people of color.*

These three external markers of being a professional–clothes, skin color and sex/gender–are visible signs of the active presence of the interacting effects of capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy on our professional lives. How do we confront and challenge the messages of these oppressive systems while keeping foremost in our minds respecting our clients while being our unique selves?

Three student participants shared their differing perceptions of what was viewed as a professional within their families unique cultural context marked by gender, race, ethnicity, spirituality/religion. For this Jewish student being a professional is marked by education, especially a masters' degree and money.

> *In the Jewish family, a professional is someone who is very well educated: a lawyer, a doctor . . . whereas, in like an Irish-Catholic family, a professional is someone who is that head guy at the labor factory. It goes back to your values which comes from your culture. . . . because Jewish people, uhm, you know, really like therapy and talking . . . uhm, but then there's also how much money, like your worth, is also really tied into that. It's not necessarily being a couples and family therapist but your masters degree . . . . It would be OK to be a teacher. You've got really good benefits and weekends and summers off, and the pension. ... in my culture ...even though you don't make that much money, it's very respectable but in my family you'd have to have your masters in education.*

In contrast, for this African American student, being a professional is "about how much money you make. It is very economic." It is about not "working with my hands ... not a laborer" rather than "the level of education that I have attained."

> *I've always gotten the impression from my family or just African Americans in my circle, that a professional is about how much money you make. It's very economic. Uhm, my family could care less that I have a masters degree. What they know is when I'm getting a job, you know, and how much money I'm going to make: that constitutes professional. . . . I'm not working with my hands, not a laborer: that constitutes professionalism as opposed to the level of education . . . that has to do with social class . . .*

This participant discussed both race and social class here and situated her example in her local context. I did not ask these students to clarify how their perceptions of who is a professional might differ *within* each of their cultures depending on social class. How have these cultures which have experienced oppression and ranking viewed education differently? What has allowed for those differing perceptions?

This next participant referred to social class, gender and race as informative of what constitutes a professional. She explained that "growing up in my social class, the money has always been there" and "education is valued more than money" in determining whether one is a professional or not. Identifying herself as a "white female," this student participant clarified that in her family "teachers and nurses" were not "looked upon as professional" because it was something that "white women" were "allowed to do." This suggests to me that being a professional is doing or even being something that is set apart by social class, gender and race. In other words, a professional is educated and does something other than what white women were traditionally allowed to do.

> *In my family . . . teachers and nurses, that's not looked upon as professional as much because that was the only thing that white women were allowed to do, you know, that's not really an accomplishment. . . . I earn no money, but that's ok because I have my master's degree and it's all about the education. . . . although I'm a white female, there are a lot of opportunities available to me to make money, so . . . the education's emphasized more than money. . . . growing up in my social class, the money has always been there . . . it's not that the income isn't so valued, . . .you want to be able to support yourself, but that doesn't determine whether I'm a professional or not.*

Another participant commented on her experience with her boyfriend's Irish Catholic

family who she felt did not value her work both because "education isn't valued and ...

people who go to therapy are crazy people ... therefore, the therapist is crazy."

> *My boyfriends' family is Irish-Catholic, and they think what I do is
> ridiculous, and I'm really looked down upon for two reasons: first, that
> education isn't valued and the other reason is that they're very private and
> they think that people that go to therapy are crazy people. So, therefore,
> the therapist is, you know, crazy . . . that's again spirituality and your
> belief system, which contributes a lot to what you value . . . and your
> perception of what a professional is.*

Coming from an Irish Catholic family, I both relate to and wonder about these

assumptions. Certainly, the Irish developed status and power in this country through

Irish Catholic educational systems. "Catholic" education has always been highly valued

within the Irish Catholic community and I believe, still is. I have never heard affirmation

for advanced degrees except a medical or a law degree. Within my own Irish working-

class extended family, including those who are now comfortably middle and upper-

middle class, the sentiments are similar to those echoed by the previous African

American student, what difference is it going to make in terms of money and lifestyle?

Skilled labor is still highly valued within my family, but issues such as long-term wear

and tear on the body, danger and benefits are uppermost in people's minds. Regarding

therapy, I have never heard anyone putting it down. Suffice it to say that no one in my

family that has ever gone to therapy or admitted to it. Privacy is more the issue.

Another interesting class ranking or as she described it, "status" distinction, was made

by this student participant from India between doctoral students in general and marriage

and family therapists. As several students had mentioned both here and in Chapter 5,

education is highly valued in a number of cultures. In this excerpt, this student clarified

that being a being a "Ph.D. student" had a higher status than being a "marriage and

family therapist." When she mentioned she was a doctoral student in family therapy,

they heard "doctoral student" and didn't even listen to the rest."

> *When I am saying that I am a doctoral student in marriage and family therapy, I see people looking at me differently then when I say that, you know, I'm a marriage and family therapist. I am talking about other Asians perceiving me; probably, there's a difference in how Caucasians perceive themselves or others. . . . obviously, uhm, people of a higher class would be, uhm, in business, engineering, or computers . . . I don't think it's a class. It's status. ... when I tell other Asian Indians I'm doing marriage and family therapy then I feel I have a different status then when I say I am a Ph.D. student. Ph.D. covers marriage and family therapy.... if I just say doctoral student, they don't even listen to the rest. (laughing)*

A doctoral student in "business, engineering or computers" might have a higher status

than a family therapy student. As this participant noted "people of a higher class" would

be in those professions. How does gender and, in this specific case, caste provide

complexity to this ranking system. The profession of family therapy is not highly ranked.

The marketing of the professional

I was asking students in one program how they felt that the profession of family

therapy dealt with social class issues. This next student said she felt that we did not deal

with social class issues. When I asked her to elaborate, she suggested:

> *The AAMFT conference when you had "Therapy in the Mainstream." Now, what the hell was that? . . . I didn't go. I was pissed about it. I mean on a number of levels that was definitely a class thing. My gut feelings are that there's an interest in "the powers that be" in our field to get more power because they feel powerless . . . which leaves us in a very bad position to help people who are impoverished.*

Students in several other programs brought up this particular conference. One student

mused about therapy being for the "mainstream" middle or upper class who "have the

privilege to think about the quality of life" rather than the "outliers."

> *Even with our AAMFT presentations we say therapy with the fringes, you know, . . . they are like the outliers, not the mainstream in therapy.*

> *Therapy seems more like middle class, upper class. People who have the time and energy and privilege to think about . . . the quality of life.*

That therapy was being shaped on the model of middle class clients in AAMFT was echoed by a number of student participants. Students who considered themselves "outliers" identified with clients outside the mainstream perhaps because it left them with not belonging, being therapists outside of "the Mainstream."

Those students, who felt financially disadvantaged either by their temporary status as students and/or their social class positions, often were unable to participate in this or other professional conferences and activities, depriving them of opportunities of important professional support, learning and socialization. What these students did learn, according to this next student, is isomorphic to clients and society in general: if you do not have the financial or support resources, you "miss out."

> *You know, you miss out, that's the sort of message. My first year AAMFT met really early that year so none of the new people coming in really had a lot of time to plan . . . I missed a good learning opportunity there. . . . certainly in terms of trying to climb that entry academia hierarchy, like the more things that you put on your vita about: gave a poster, gave a presentation at such and such workshop, that's all necessary.*

Another student who was able to afford the money to fly out to a conference and register found she was not able to afford the expensive hotel chosen to host the conference. Along with many other graduate students, she found a hostel in the city and either walked to the conference or was able to get enough students together to hire a taxi.

> *the conferences are always held in the most expensive hotels. The first one . . . I stayed at a hostel and walked two miles every day to the conference . . . luckily there were grads from all over . . . and other times we said, "Let's grab a taxi and climb in as many people, and just pay a couple of bucks . . . but there was no way I could afford the Marriott, you know, I was already shelling out enough money to fly there and register. (sighs) All these little . . . not so subtle ways that makes it . . . inaccessible.*

I attended this same conference as a student volunteer which I reached by ground transportation because I couldn't afford to fly. I stayed in the same hostel where I was unable to sleep because of the number of people in the dorm. While the public transportation by day was wonderful, only my experience regularly taking public transport and my "street sense" helped me to anticipate and narrowly negotiate two nighttime incidents that I felt threatened my safety when I was returning from my volunteer responsibilities. I could not afford a taxi and finally decided that it was safer walking the long blocks to the hostel at night because I could at least run rather than being trapped in the subway with only a few passengers around. If anything had happened to me, I imagine more than a few heads would have wagged wondering why I took such a risk. I probably would not have been seen as a student eager to participate in my professional association and who took seriously my responsibilities as a volunteer, an opportunity which allowed me the "privilege" of attending an AAMFT conference.

Why do we not have conferences in more financially accessible accommodations? Those who prefer more affluent surrounding are more likely to be able to afford transportation from other sites than those who are more financially disadvantaged. Who is our priority within the association? In what other ways do financial resources speak and bestow privilege on more affluent members while oppressing members with less financial advantage? Dare our profession again lead from the fringes and seek to confront rather than merely reflect dominant social values? Or are we too comfortable in "the mainstream" and fearful of being the "outliers" once again? What would be the financial consequences of one-again embracing our marginalized identities in a pro-active

(rather than re-active) way? Is it possible to fight for recognition in the centrist mainstream and still be visionary and in solidarity with subaltern, marginalized voices?

<div align="center">**Program**</div>

Program Philosophy

Social responsibility

Faculty participants in all the programs expressed a strong sense of social responsibility to society in general and to client/consumers in particular for training competent therapists who were aware of the socio-political context, including social class. They believed it was their responsibility to "take a stand" and respond to oppression and highlight privilege. This faculty participant expressed that this was one of her personal and professional motivations for being involved in training, a commitment echoed by many faculty.

> *Well, I certainly feel a sense of responsibility about, uhm, really contextual issues in general that, uhm, I am participating in training, uhm, professional students who go out and treat the wider community. I feel an obligation to the people in the community at large professionally, (laughs) more to the consumer at this point, to train people who are competent to work with them . . . I feel, uhm, a strong sense of responsibility. It's one of the reasons ... that I'm here.*

Other faculty participants at several programs cited their own social class experiences and struggles as being motivators for their own commitment to socio-economically disadvantaged clients and to training the next generation of therapists to be socially responsible. This participant cited his memory of a "lack of resources" for his desire to "give back" and his awareness of social class issues. His commitment to working in a profession with "clients who are disadvantaged" was a way of "honoring" those experiences.

> *I wanted to give back, I, I felt fortunate, you know, that we moved up. . . . I still remember how it feels to be poor and not to have enough to eat . . . the lack of resources. . . . Being in this profession is part of honoring that too, you know, working with clients, and being committed to working with clients who are disadvantaged.*

Another participant who worked in a hospital credited that experience with her awareness of the lack of services for clients without money. She saw her role as a client advocate who "enjoyed" using her power and position to gain access to needed services.

> *As I've worked in the hospital for the last ten years. . . . I've become extremely focused on money and the lack of money. . . . my role always became this client advocate because the people that I came into contact with were living much poorer than even I ever was or I ever felt like I would be given my social systems and support systems. . . . I have enjoyed using my power of my position . . . to gain access to services that the person themselves if they called up and asked for it couldn't always get.*

Faculty talked about their ethical responsibility to expose therapists to clients different than themselves in general and poor/working-class clients in particular. This faculty participant talked about his program's connection with a Head Start project where students were exposed to in-home work with families who "lack resources."

> *Another project is the Head Start project where students go out into these families' homes. Otherwise, they can go out of here . . . having never worked with a really under-privileged family. To me, that's unethical. . . . this kind of exposes students to working with clients who, uhm, lack resources. If you go into private practice, you have economically privileged therapists working with economically privileged clients.*

This had an added advantage, according to this participant, of putting the "student's poverty in a different perspective … 'cause their poverty is still a *big* privilege."

> *Getting out of the Ivory Tower . . . and seeing people who don't have resources . . . has put student's poverty in a very different perspective 'cause their poverty is still a* big *privilege, you know, they make a lot of money, or . . . have access to resources these families don't. When they see pretty well to do families here, you know, they can easily feel poor.*

Another faculty participant explained that she had become a program director because she believed that it was the program's responsibility to "deal with this issues" by putting together "a committed faculty" to "raise students' awareness about these issues" and to have "diverse student bodies" to "experience and hopefully be able to share" about these issues. This was often in contrast to the "lip service" expressed but "lack of action" demonstrated by the field and professional association.

> *I became a program director so I could influence these issues because the field has given a lot of lip service to it . . . our professional association, you know, uhm, you don't see this in action and I think that's sinful. I mean, we hear talk about it, you know, in peaks and valleys but it is our responsibility to, uhm, deal with these issues. . . . they have direct bearing on people's lives, so, yes, we have a responsibility. What we try to do is put together a committed faculty, you know, to help raise our students' awareness about these issues and to have diverse student bodies, you know, uhm, so that they can also experience and hopefully be able to share with each other about some of these issues.*

The diversity of the world and our need to adapt to it in order to do more effective therapy was the message from this faculty participant who felt that programs would be doing a "huge disservice" to students and clients if they did not learn about issues such as "race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality."

> *The world is getting to be more diverse and ... these are issues that are effecting people, you know, ... and if we don't address them, then they're not going to be doing good therapy. . . . And to take out race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, all that stuff and not have them learn anything about that, then we'd be doing a huge disservice to them* and *to our clients.*

This faculty participant challenged that an important responsibility of the program was to "help people not to lose track or cut themselves off from under-privilege" and to "*use* their professional identity" to do that.

> *our work is to help people not to lose track or cut themselves off from under-privilege . . . to* use *their professional identity. A part of professional identity is to be able to look into a mirror . . . as a therapist*

> *who is a professional, uhm, vis a vis, under-privilege, and ask, "Is that part of my professional goals and what I strive for?*

Or as a faculty colleague from another program expressed the hope:

> *that students will be family therapists who will challenge oppression.*

This faculty participant who saw the program training "clinicians, scholars and activists" emphasized that he wanted students to be both "market-competitive … while at the same time having some consciousness about … the spectrum of diversity issues."

> *I want my students to get an education that will enable them to be market-competitive, uhm, while having some consciousness about, uhm, the spectrum of diversity issues. . . . How can I get a base, secure myself and my family and at the same time, have some sense of consciousness and … responsibility to that which is far greater? . . . we are training clinicians, scholars and activists. . . . I have some greater responsibility out in society so it's not enough to do it here, in the intimacy of this room …and tolerate it out there, or it's not enough to go out and just wait for it to come to you. You comment on it when you see it out there. . . . you take a position.*

Taking a position was echoed by many faculty participants. Having a "strong belief about policy issues and how they inform practice" was a standpoint shared by this participant who noted many students "don't want to hear that at all." While student were eager to deal with family issues, the "larger systems" belonged "in another domain."

> *I have a strong belief about policy issues and how they inform practice . . . they really don't want to hear that at all. They really see themselves going in there and dealing with the family issues . . . but not in the larger system, even though they are informed that we look at larger systems before they come into this program, it's something that belongs in another domain.*

As a faculty member from another program simply declared:

> *I consider this my mission …you know, to be a thorn in their side.*

Many students welcomed "taking a look" at these type issues and their privilege, even when they "were not used to having those questions raised according to this faculty participant, reflecting on a previous program. It was "part of our responsibility."

where I was before I was here, uhm, they, they were not used to having those questions raised. Questions of race or class or any of that was pretty much a surprise to them. But once they were raised, you know, they welcomed taking a look at that, and what it meant and who they were and what privilege they had . . . I see that as part of our responsibility.

Social class discourse

Social class conversations can be provocative, emotional and potentially divisive. Most people are taught to avoid them, like religion, politics, taxes, and death. Many participants in the research project stated that these very significant conversations were raised in their programs in spite of this social taboo. As one faculty participant declared:

it's very difficult for student . . . to get through here . . . without having interactions and discussions about these things and the angst these cause.

One faculty participant talked about an experience that she did in her classes when she asked "a brave student" to construct a rank of importance of the other students that exposed social class. This was typical of conversations "we talk about all the time."

One of the experiences that I do in my classes . . . I have a brave student get up and take all the students and put them in a row, based on, uhm, how important they are. . . . And social class is, you know, is in front of that process...so that that kind of stuff just we talk about all the time.

Another faculty participant pointed out how she initially "missed my chance" to comment on social class issues when one of her students made some assumptions about privilege and credit cards. Later, she did follow it up with a "neat discussion around that issue because ... the idea in this program, is we're hoping to expand the idea of class.

one of my students . . . made a very nice presentation but it involved certain assumptions about every one in that room and credit cards . . . as if everyone should have, you know, . . . grown up with the same privileges. One of the students tried to say something about, you know, larger issues around certain people having privileges and more access to credit cards, and I was waiting for someone to say, " . . . nobody sent me a credit card." Unfortunately, no one spoke up, and . . . I missed my chance. But, we did follow it up with a neat discussion around that issue because . . . the idea in this program is we're hoping to expand the idea of class.

Underscoring the importance of deconstructing the dominant social class discourse,
this faculty participant from still another program highlighted the importance of
challenging the assumption that social class revolves "around culture, race, ethnicity ...
and specifically people of color" and white "trailer trash." "People of privilege ... stay
out of this idea of class.

> when we start talking about class, it almost always leads to ... a
> discussion around culture, race, ethnicity ...and specifically people of
> color. It doesn't move into an issue of class or ethnicity around white ...
> uhm, unless it's, you know, kind of the "trailer trash" or something like
> that, you know. . . . Usually, you know, people of privilege, middle class,
> upper white families, stay out of this idea of class.

Describing the first day in his ethics class, a faculty participant from another program
explained how discussing "what's your motivation for being here?" or "I've got a lot of
debt . . . and wonder how I'm going to live" were some of the ways class was talked
about without saying "we're going to have a little "class" discussion."

> The first day we start the ethics class, one of the first things ...that I tell
> them is that, "You need to find a reason to do this." ... one student, two
> years ago, spend the whole first year, saying, "I could've made more
> money ... with my undergraduate degree than I will with this graduate
> degree," . . . I mean, what's the motivation for being here? So, ... there's
> lots of different ways we talk about it ...for some people why that won't
> matter is because their family has some money or other people, you know,
> "Well, I've got a lot of debt in the last couple years and wonder how I'm
> going to live." Again, I think it's discussed but ... I don't say we're going
> to have a little "class" discussion.

Some students, however, had a different perspective.

> I have no problems bringing up gender issues, racial issues, uhm, social
> economic issues to some sense but in terms of class the way we have been
> discussing it tonight, I don't think it comes up that much.

Other participants disagreed with the frequently and context of how these
conversations "came up" and were discussed. One student who was "just beginning the

program" observed "so far we haven't addressed interfaces between race, gender,

ethnicity and culture." In her courses, "class is not generally included."

> *I'm just beginning the program, . . . so far we haven't addressed interfaces between race, gender, ethnicity and culture or other, uhm, factors that very much inform the way I interact with clients or the way that clients interact with each other . . . in supervision, but also in all of our classes ... those factors have to be introduced and I think they're not, but when I hear the factors that are discussed, class is not in generally included.*

Other student participants commented that social class was rarely addressed in the

programs except as a part of the "race, gender, class mantra" with social class issues

being the least focused on or discussed in depth. This next participant who is on the

"other end of the program" said in her experience these issues get addressed but that "in

truth class typically seems more like one of the things on the list ... but it never gets

highlighted." Noting that there are no courses in her program on social class per se, she

suggested that "there's less of a clear sense of how to talk about that."

> *Being on the sort of the other end of the program, . . . that stuff gets addressed but in truth class typically seems more like one of the things of the list, when you make "the list" about dimensions of diversity . . . And it goes on the list, uhm, but it's never gets highlighted. We have a class on gender, uhm, we have a couple of classes on sort of cultural diversity as a whole, we did a class on sexual identity, umh, but we've never had a class on ... just social class, you know? It does come up.... but there's less of a clear sense of how to talk about that...*

One student commented that she would have to see more concrete evidence of the

importance of social class via a "syllabus ... books or chapters in our books."

> *I would need to see in some syllabus, I would need to see, uhm, books or chapters in our books about social class that aren't there. We would need to include discussions about social class theories or about the way we treat our clients ... what we bring in and what we expect, uhm.*

In one program, social class issues *were* woven into at least one didactic course.

Noting that social class "kind of comes up at the end, like, oops, and I almost forgot to mention…" this same student challenged the common assumption "that social class is linked only to people of color or only to people from another country, … and the privilege I have as being like a white, middle class person here."

> *we're all in this process together trying to incorporate all these different dimensions…I'm not sure where I should prioritize social class . . . I mean, if I hear it, it kind of comes up at the end, like, oops, and I almost forgot to mention…. These connections might have come up … around race, and around ethnicity. I don't think that social class is linked only to people of color or only to people from another country, … and the privilege I have as being like a white, middle class person here.*

From other things this student contributed and the context of this remark, I wonder if the point here is "being *like* a white, middle class person here." What assumptions are being made and like myself in this example, are not being checked out, regarding race, ethnicity, social class and other aspects of culture when students or faculty appear "like a white, middle class person here"? What assumptions do we make about privilege or oppression regarding class and other aspects of culture such as race and ethnicity?

This point was clearly brought home to me through a student in my training program who was white, came from an affluent home, was born in the South and had a Southern accent. I had made some assumptions about her lens and was quite surprised to find out that throughout most of her formative years, she had been raised in Hawaii with her family. Her "step-father," the man she called her father, was native Hawaiian. Her "lens" was profoundly shaped by that life experience.

Another faculty participant pointed out the lack of clarity with social class terms. As an example, the ambiguous use of "middle class" results in the inherent class power dynamics being obscured. In particular, she challenged that by not expanding "our

definition of middle class … we don't look at the ways in which social class informs us as a faculty." This results in dishonesty because the lack of clarity was never addressed.

> *Social class is something we, uhm, talk very little about and . . . are, uhm, continually dishonest about. . . . Uhm, you know, when you ask somebody what their social class is, you know, nine times out of ten they say middle class, and uhm, you know, my definition of middle class, I'm sure, is quite different from your definition of middle class . . . and yet, we don't go anywhere with it. And you know, . . . we talk about how we challenge and you know, are open and in your face about things, but we don't, we don't expand our definition of middle class …we don't look at the ways in which social class informs as a faculty, the way, you know, we live and a certain amount of money informs, you know, all of those things. We, we don't talk about it. So, I feel like it's a lie (barely audible).*

We are dishonest by what we choose to ignore, allow to be silenced and thus, "invisible." Is it invisible or more like the elephant in the room that we are continually socialized to not address? How does having money inform our decisions, professionally and personally? How does it effect the way program decisions, teaching, supervision and therapy? Who gets to make the decisions, how are those decisions made and is that process talked about? In what ways is this process not so hidden? Who decides what is allowed to be discussed and with whom? Why don't we want to talk about it more openly? How does the myth of mobility, not only in society but also in our programs and in our faculty, influence us? How does it put us in our places in the hierarchy? How do we collude with this discourse? How is this lack of focus and process "a lie"? What are the dangers and social rules about confronting this "omission?"

This next participant shared her own reasons for her reluctance to talk about social class, noting that "it's touchy for me" bringing up "a lot of feelings, a lot of passion." She remarked on the "very close connection between race and class" and how that "determines and dictates your worth and how you're going to be treated in society."

> *It's a very painful subject to talk about, it's touchy for me. It brings up a lot of feelings, a lot of passion, uhm, . . . what I experienced is that there's a very close connection between race and class. . . . if you're in a certain social class, based on your social class and based on the color of your skin, that determines and dictates your worth and how you're going to be treated in society. If you're not worthy . . . I don't have to give you respect either. . . . Or you are worthy of, you know, my respect if. The "if" is always based on your class and skin color. They go hand in hand . . . almost interchangeable. Either it's the color of your skin or it's the amount of money . . . and it's tough, you know, to acknowledge, be with, sit with it, uhm, because it's, you know, unjust. Unfair.*

A student in another program who identified herself as an African American from a working class background did not find it difficult to talk about class issues. She commented:

> *I have a little bit more wiggle room in talking about the taboo things.*

What experiences, familial, cultural, personal and those within the program, encourage and support the this student and other participants in "talking about the taboo things." What could faculty and programs do to facilitate these conversations?

Most participants, faculty and students, felt that social class issues were brought up in their programs. They disagreed with the frequency and context in which these were discussed or if social class was just another issue on "the list," added as an afterthought. Participants generally agreed that social class was more likely to be discussed in supervision and therapy, especially when the client was "obviously" from a lower social class, presumably based on appearances. Nonetheless, some faculty lamented that students missed certain issues with middle and upper class clients, e.g. substance abuse, because of common class associations. Many students complained that while social class issues were addressed in supervision regarding clients, that their own social class issues were more likely to be invisible or ignored. Several participants, students and faculty, commented about the difficulty of addressing social class issues, noting the pain it

caused, the lack of clarity around terms such as "middle class" and "social class" and the

tendency to ignore issues that might create controversy and expose power.

The Making of a Professional

Programs, academia, and social class

Within each of the programs, there are different ranking or "class" systems that both

student and faculty participants commented on. Sometimes the participants

problemitized the ranking; other times they did not. Ranking is part of our social context.

> *it's even more complicated than that. I've been thinking about the*
> *undergraduates here. And I think our conversations are going to be very*
> *different. We're academics. Uhm, and I think, uhm, it's different if*
> *you're, if you're talking about people who are not in the helping*
> *professions or trained to be teaching the helping professions.*

Class exposes itself through our educational institutions as several participants pointed

out. Using class marked and loaded language such as "prestigious" or "lower class"

participants would often refer to their program or institution's ranking within the context

of other remarks. As this faculty participant pointed out, positioning on this hierarchy

may be evidenced by the privilege of students who do not have to work while going to

school as well as the condition of the facilities, including the bathrooms.

> *when I was teaching, uhm, family therapy at (another institution), that's a*
> *very . . . lower class school . . . . Their Master's programs are taught at*
> *night because everybody works. I mean, this is not a privileged*
> *community of people . . . the facility alone, you walk down the halls, the*
> *bathrooms are smelly, I mean, it's just disgusting (laughs). What can I*
> *say . . . that's a different experience from being here.*

Class is evident by the ranking within the institution itself. This participant described

her own program low status within their department which effected funding such as

student assistantships and their ranking in regard to other therapy programs. In spite of

that positioning, the program managed to get some "things that we want."

> *We are becoming our own department; . . . we have been the pimple on their ass (laugher) even though we have been very highly regarded elsewhere. . . . the relationship has not been a good one, and our students have suffered in things like assistantships ...I'm never as clear in the college politics but I've always gotten the idea that there's been tension, and yet, . . . uhm, there is a way that we getting things that we want. So, it's a little schizophrenic in that, in terms of funding; we are nowhere near as . . . highly regarded as other programs are.*

This faculty participant pointed out how issues about money such as tuition "always then leads somehow to, sometimes more overt, often times more covert, discussions about class considerations" in turn impacting supervision and classes.

> *in my corner of the university it comes up, uhm, quite a bit in different ways in that, you know, you hear about . . . the institution tuition structure, you know, uhm, money always then leads somehow to, sometimes more overt, often times more covert, discussions about class considerations ... in supervision and didactic classes here, uhm. I mean, like yesterday, we're saying to students that this idea that we need multiple lens to look at the problems as we consider the therapeutic relationship, and what are the, uhm, informants of that relationship to class, as one example, in the relationship of class, race and gender. . . .*

A student participant commented on the class ranking of the programs within programs especially between master's and doctoral studies and the faculty who teach each, resulted in a sense of exclusion outside the "Ph.D. community."

> *there was a conflict between the master's level's faculty and the Ph.D. We were obviously a step down class wise and the master's level folks didn't understand it and I kind of sided with them because I was in the master's program. Now I am in the Ph.D. program and I understand exactly what that was all about because we're running the second half of the gauntlet here and it's harder. On one hand, there's a sense of pride or satisfaction on accomplishing that, on the other hand there's a sense of a whole class shift ...the first time someone calls you doctor, you do a double take . . . There were two or three master's level people who weren't full time faculty members but there was always some sense that they were, you know, step child of the program ... the Ph.D. community is somewhat exclusive ....*

I find it interesting that several students have used the family concept of "step-child" to describe a lack of class or social positioning (illustrating our social ranking even within

families). This last student referred to membership, boundaries and exclusion in regards to the "Ph.D. community." He mentioned part-time faculty who taught in the Master's program as well. Part time faculty are often adjuncts in many settings and are often considered staff rather than "faculty." Part-time faculty often work without benefits, at a lower rate of pay and usually do not participate in decision making.

A faculty participant also briefly commented on class ranking within the faculty, not directly commenting on roles or positions within the faculty (director, full professor, associate, etc.) but rather "by what we do … not just based on money, but on what we own, what kind of clients we have …"

> We, uhm, rank higher by what we do, like we sit with a supervisee, there's a ranking and a class issue that may occur, not just based on, uhm, money, but on what we own, what kind of clients we have . . . .

What I was a little unclear about was who was doing the ranking? Was it the students (supervisees) themselves, the faculty or both?

Students did not comment on the perceived class ranking of post-degree programs within the accreditation structure, possibly because I was not aware and astute enough to ask questions to explore this idea. I wonder if post-degree programs might be the "step-child" of the professional association, AAMFT?

Another student participant who acknowledged that she "never was real good at keeping my mouth shut," commented on the differential "class" standing within the program for students, passing through "initiation stages" to reach more of a sense of "collegiality" and openness from faculty to discuss various issues.

> There are . . . initiation stages you have to go through as a trainee, and although I never was real good at keeping my mouth shut I must confess, but the expectation was that I would and . . . over the years there's more than ever a sense of collegiality . . . and so I personally put my personal energy towards trying to create that in my little piece of the interaction.

Students addressed several class issues in the program and universities in regards to access to resources. Who has parking was an issue that was alluded to in several programs such as in the following example which sparked a loud and intense response.

> *We don't have parking ... (reply) but other people have parking.*

In several but not all programs, faculty did have access to parking while students did not. While none of the faculty referenced it in this research, the issue of faculty's access or lack of access to privileged parking is contested in some contexts. No one mentioned what access program and support staff in regard to parking. Regarding access to other resources, students in one program mentioned that monies were made available for the administrative assistant to attend the yearly conference, a policy they applauded.

Several participants referenced the class structure both within and supporting the program. This student participant focused on the "invaluable" role the administrative assistant played in their department and it central function to students' education. Yet, this staff person was paid "beyond lousy."

> *This department could not function without the administrative assistant. ... I don't know what exactly she gets paid, but it's always referred ... as beyond lousy. And yet in some ways, she is the most invaluable person in the department. Uhm, faculty come and go, and all are wonderful and unique, but, you know, ... she's just as central to our education.*

The next faculty participant pointed out the "differential value attached" to what the faculty do in the program versus the invisible labor of support staff "who clean the building and empty the trash." Faculty has an opportunity to get tenure while maintenance and other staff do not have this privilege. Although this action is very overt, we do not "name class" in those discussions "but it is class" that is being talked about.

> *Some happen in a pretty overt way . . . indirect conversations about class like we were having yesterday when we were talking about, uhm, that whole piece about tenure and who gets it, and you know, and why do I get*

> *it, but the people who clean the building and empty the trash don't get it. We didn't name class in that discussion but it very much class was one was being talked about . . . recognizing the differential value attached to what we do and the implications that has for lots of folks.*

This next student participant made several comments about the class distinctions made in the program and the resulting stress that came with high expectations

> *if they let us just be ourselves and take away some of this class distinction and having to achieve up in the stratosphere, somehow that's going to lower our ability and the quality of education, that somehow we'll just fall into that same group of, you know, kind of, half motivated undergraduates, you know,(laughs), that just wants to get by . . . they are afraid that it will effect the quality of education and lower their standards. . . . if you do well, then that reflects well on me as opposed to acting as to lower my status. . . . there are some very specific expectations .... There definitely are standards . . .So, with higher status comes higher expectations and ... it's expected to change who you are.*

This student then addressed the issue of ranking among the students and within the program. While there is "lip service" to the idea that students are "colleagues," age, gender, previous school attended, and even one's "verbal skills in class" divide them from each other.

> *There is a certain amount of lip service paid to certain things but the reality is different. . . . you have the feeling of being colleagues, but . . . for whatever reason, whether its age, or gender, or background, or what school you went to before you came here or whatever, there's, you know, social class. Here we are divided to some degree and even by, you know, your verbal skills in class. We're probably lumped into categories based on how we are ranked in the program.*

One of the tragic results of the pressure, stress and anxiety imposed by these higher expectations from programs, from universities as well as society in general is the "number of suicides among graduate students" according to this student participant. Although these suicides were not linked to his program, they served as a reminder of the stresses experienced by many students in therapy programs. By highlighting the "class

distinction associated with education" more pressures are put on students than a

generation ago when "education was a good thing but you didn't kill yourself."

> *We've just got to pay attention to the number of suicides among graduate students. Our expectations are tremendous. The pressures are people, you know, I haven't followed the figures lately but people have died for sure around this campus and when I was in my master's program, too. . . . we let . . . the class or the status our education brings to us become such a huge thing . . . we just have heightened that class distinction associated with education because it is the door of opportunity . . . it was better a generation or two before when . . . a college education was a good thing but you didn't kill yourself.*

For students who are getting a Ph.D. in addition to professional credentials, there is a

heightened class distinction. This participant suggested with the "certificate on the wall

... we are escorted into a higher level of status whether we anticipate it or not."

> *There's a class change for us when we get out of here. I don't think we experience it as much here because we're in this cloistered, intense environment but when we step out in the world and we put our certificate on the wall and people say, "ooh, you have a Ph.D. from ...." all of a sudden that means something and we are escorted into a higher level of class status whether we anticipate it or not.*

The university or family therapy programs do not happen in a vacuum. Family

therapy programs often reflect rather than mold social expectations, including the "class"

distinctions within their programs.

Faculty and social class

Both faculty and student participants had some thoughts about the social class of

faculty members, although significantly less than both groups had about student's social

class. This student participant who had been "trying to think why hasn't social class been

discussed" suggested that it was because those who traditionally did supervision and

therapy were in "that dominant class" and it was "assumed," therefore "that everybody

starts with a degree of privilege." If people all are alike, there's nothing to discuss and if you were different, "being like me is what's normal" so "you're here to think like me."

> *The people who are initiating supervision and therapy, may traditionally have been in that, uhm, dominant class where, you know, it's just assumed that everybody starts with a degree of privilege. And I don't think we ever talk about it ...uhm, just like race wasn't necessarily discussed or gender.... it's assumed that you can be like or you're starting to be like me, or being like me is what's normal. . . .You're here to think like me.*

The message then becomes "be like or become like me;" don't be or act different. bell hooks (1995c) talked about this as the "myth of sameness." In an earlier article "The Theoretical Myth of Sameness," Ken Hardy (1990, p. 18) highlighted this monocular view which he challenged as a "neglect of context." While Hardy's focus was on the therapist's lack of awareness of the diversity of culture in client families (among and within cultural groups), the myopic viewpoint of sameness also infects our awareness of the diversity among therapists, faculty and students. While the traditional identities of therapists were concentrated among white, European descent, middle to upper class men because of power, privilege and access, turning a "blind eye" to the diversity of identities among current practitioners only perpetuates and reinforces this myth of sameness. This is not to ignore the current significant lack of numerical representation among groups with less status in this society or to turn a "blind eye" to the concentration of power among those groups with the most status. It is only a challenge for us not to collude with the illusion that we are all the same.

This faculty participant commented on this issue when discussing the euphemism "middle class" while acknowledging that it was the label that most people would say he was given his position of privilege.

> *People would say I'm middle-class but ... it's a useless term, uhm, because everybody's middle-class. ... the majority of people will say*

> *they're middle-class and there's vast differences between a lot of the people .... Uhm, ... I'm very privileged .... I can pay my bills, uhm, I may not have a lot of money left over to put it into the bank but I have a roof over my head, food, and I don't have to worry about feeding my, my family, uhm, I look at that as more of being privileged, uhm, than kind of class because, you know, I, I say I'm middle class.*

I am curious about what else this participant was saying. There was an acknowledgment of privilege, and that others said he was middle class and that he said he was "middle class." Yet, from my perspective, there was text pointing to another perspective on this story such as "I may not have a lot of money left over to put into the bank but ..." and "I look at that as more of being privileged, uhm, than kind of class ...." as well as the hesitancy in saying that he's "middle class."

An interesting social class context was shared by a faculty member from Europe who commented in his home country he would "make more money" than here and would have higher social status. However, the issue was access. He indirectly noted his own privilege here because "There are people who, who wait all their lives ... for a professorship, and most of them never get it."

> *I would make more money with social security and in salaries, some professors ... make much higher than here. Uhm, so I probably would be even higher up in the social hierarchy. ... The only thing is the access, you know, to jobs like ours is much worse than here. ... I wouldn't get a job there. There are people who, who wait all their lives ... for a professorship, and most of them never get it.*

This statement was one of the few acknowledgments by a faculty participant, although indirect, of privilege per se, as faculty. I wondered how the privilege associated with the role impacts faculty's self-definition of social class. There are many academics in other professions, for example, who continue to identify themselves as working-class. Given their verbal awareness of privilege, I wondered what aspects of faculty privilege were indeed invisible and unspoken and what aspects were imposed or assumed by themselves

or by others (students for example). My own lack of awareness and questions had not been focused enough or created the space to encourage discussion in this area. It made me wonder about the "costs" (oppression suffered) to "earn" this privilege.

Tracy Robinson (1999, p. 77) called unearned privilege, "the interlocking glue." Perhaps privilege, both earned and unearned, can glue our "eyes wide shut" if we are not vigilant, especially if whatever "powers that be" continue to expect tribute for these privileges. This next student participant commented on the privilege of faculty and "the powers that be" and how the gooey glue of privilege might gum up the ability to see the struggles of students in need. The complex context of an institution that is perceived as being "expensive" and powerful and faculty who "for the most part are not starving" and are perceived as not having the "need" or being in touch with "not being able to have the bills met," results in the conclusion that both the institution and faculty might lack a "motivation to reach down and help somebody that does have that need."

> *There's really no motivation, here. . . . you're an institutional power in one of the most expensive universities in the nation, you know, you've got a faculty here that for the most part are not starving. . . . If you don't have that need, you're not in touch with it, or if you've never been in touch with it, what's really going to give you motivation to reach down and help somebody that does have that need?*

My perception was that faculty in general did have the awareness and motivation to reach *out* especially to be respond to clients who struggled financially. Several faculty also seemed very aware of and had reached out to students who struggled. Most of the students had commented on the faculty's willingness to respond when issues were brought to their attention. What would it take to expand the sensitivity to clients and the willingness to respond to students to broaden to include a general sensitivity and proactive response to students? to other faculty? What are the dangers of taking that

stance? How does that enhance or create a barrier to the goal of social responsibility, awareness of privilege and oppression and being advocates for clients?

This last faculty participant raised a challenge regarding the need of a diversity of faculty members in order to break down the divisions and language and change "the view we hold about class."

> *that speaks to the need of why there really should be, uhm, diverse faculty members. . . . And to me, we haven't talked about why we have the field of professionals continue to support a division, and language, you know, and what we're going to do, uhm, in terms of helping to change, you know, the view that we now hold about class.*

My hope would be that this "call for diversity" would include a diversity of social class backgrounds among the faculty and would provide plans of affirmative action that would encourage a wide diversity of faculty identities across social class, race, sex/gender, sexual orientation, age, religion/spirituality, ethnicity/nationality, and ability. This would provide important role models for students and faculty alike.

Students and social class

Most faculty agreed that most graduate students tended not to have a lot of money. Both recognized that students were privileged by their access to education and their relative privilege once they have earned their degree.

> *You know, I think in reality, in order to be able to make it this far, to the doctoral program or the master's program, I think you have to have some privilege, by definition, at least compared to you know Head Start client families or crime families or some of the other families we work with. You still have some privileges now, uhm, so it's a matter of preference, uhm.*

The major area of disagreement was in naming the social class of the students. This faculty participant alluded to both ends of the spectrum, "very wealthy" students who have examined their privilege, including what that "has meant for their relationships with

other students in the program" and students for whom the "assistantship is not enough …

two part-time jobs on top of that" and the effect on their academic standing.

> *We have had very wealthy, very privileged students, uhm, who have to*
> *take a critical look at that, not just in a closet, but in terms of what it also .*
> *. . has meant for their relationships with other students in the program. . . .*
> *it's also the end of the students who come in and the assistantship is not*
> *enough. . . . two part-time jobs on top of that and how that locates the*
> *student within the program in terms of academics and passing.*

It was like balm for me to hear this last comment. I have always had to work to

support myself and my family while going to school. Having parenting responsibilities

has also meant that I rarely had the luxury of going to school full time. I have become

infuriated and frustrated by the "catch-22" of the built-in class bias of this situation,

however, because I am ineligible for the very scholarships that might relieve some of this

pressure because only full time students may apply.

This faculty participant acknowledged that most graduate students "don't have much

money" and that there are "students that are fairly lower class and come from families

that are not tremendously wealthy" yet only one "had a car worse than mine."

> *we have students that are fairly lower class and come from families that*
> *are not tremendously wealthy. . . . I've got to say that most graduate*
> *students tend to be fairly poor. . . Mostly they make a lot less, I mean, they*
> *don't have much money.*

This faculty participate stated that "differences of … class in the program may not be

that large." While there may be some students "who have a lot of money" and some

students who may be "a little poor," because of the limited access of the educational

system, the really poor were not seen in the program.

> *differences of, uhm, class in the program may not be that large. . . . the*
> *poor are really are not able to immigrate. Those who immigrate have*
> *enough resources to catch a bus to the border, an airplane, or a boat that*
> *could cross the ocean, or whatever … really the poor have no access to*
> *this place. . . . to have access to, to education, you know, you can't be*

> *really poor. You know, you can be a little poor but we live in a system in*
> *which the real poor, have no access to it . . . so, we usually don't see those*
> *significant distinctions. We may see some people who have a lot of*
> *money, but we don't really see the poor at the other end of the spectrum.*

From their own perspectives, students shared their perceptions of their financial and

social class situations in graduate school. This student acknowledged her own middle

class background and current standard and "how money has made a difference." Yet,

being a student had caused her to pause and think about spending money, something she

previously did not have to do with a "very nice income."

> *I grew up in a solidly middle class household. . . . It's interesting going*
> *back to school how money has made a difference. We went from a very*
> *nice income to a nice income but I never thought about spending money*
> *before. If there was something I thought I wanted, I bought it, I didn't*
> *question it. I paid for it, you know, no big deal. Now I think about it.*

Students, like faculty, do not always readily identity with a particular social class or

the social class that others identify them with. Another student acknowledged the

difficulty identifying her social class and the stigma attached with it.

> *I even have a hard time identifying myself and where I fit with that, I*
> *mean, because I feel it's stigmatizing. . . .*

There often are social class distinction between students who have parents, extended

family and/or other significant others who could, would and perhaps already have helped

the student out financially in significant ways that provide a potential safety net in

emergencies. Many students may not want to access this "safety net" with whatever

meaning and consequences this may produce. For working-class students, this financial

safety net is often unavailable both from significant others and from other traditional

financial sources. Student loans provide privileged access to funds that would be

unavailable to many working-class families. With this privilege may come staggering

debt, sometimes more than a student can reasonably pay off.

Several student participants acknowledged the financial support of significant others, especially partners. As one student expressed it, her partner provided her "safety net." This created a "Catch 22" situation that well-meaning others did not fully understand. When this student expressed "frustration, anger and sadness" about her relationship, they suggested that she "should just end " it. Given her finances and social class, they did not appreciate "how dangerous this is."

> *Graduate students don't have much money. . . . most of my time in this program, I've been married and had a partner that had an income. That's my safety net and with it, it comes up my deep sense of frustration, anger and sadness about my relationship. Some say, "Well, maybe you should just end the relationship. ..."You don't seem to understand, that is not possible ...because of economics, finances, social class ... you're not getting how dangerous this is.*

How many of us would suggest to clients unhappy in their relationships that they should "just end it." Granted with those we personally know, our feelings are more entwined with their pain and effected by their actions or the status quo. How does her present status as graduate student and emerging professional obscure the reality of her finances and social class, making such a drastic move presently "not possible"?

A number of years ago, knowing that I was interested in both social class and gender issues, I was invited by a colleague to attend a presentation at the local NOW chapter. The presenters were also friends and colleagues, both professors at the local university. Both came from working-class backgrounds and still identified themselves as working-class. One's mother worked in the home and her father was a union, blue-collar worker. The other's mother could not find stable employment with a livable wage and benefits. Neither had experienced any luxuries in their lives and had to work hard for their achievements. In comparing their lives, however, one had suffered deprivation and the other had stability and basic security. Both struggled with "making it," paying off loans,

buying the clothes, books, memberships that were expected from "professionals." They each recognized how much more "dangerous" the position was of the friend who had lived her life without security, stability and her basic needs met.

Although considered now to be a "doctor" by her friends and colleagues who applauded that she had finally "made it," they ignored the intrusions of her "previous" life. She suffered constant health crises after years of neglect, incompetent and malign practice when she had desperately sought out health care, and the stress of going to school while juggling two jobs. Her new professional salary did not offset the mountains of accumulated bills. Within a year, she shamefully declared bankruptcy. Neither felt comfortable socially with their new colleagues although intellectually their peers. Both still had extensive obligations to their extended families but one's parents at least had insurance and a little money in the back. Both friends struggled with trying to fit into their roles and the accompanying expectations, but only one saw any light at the end of the tunnel. Neither felt their colleagues understood the struggles they faced in addition to the new treadmill of tenure.

Listening to these stories, I realized that my own story fell somewhere in between. It was the first time I had heard "professionals" talk about their pasts still being with them in the present. Yet, these pasts were either hidden (as was the case with the blue-collar family professional who was trying to "pass,") or ignored (the case with the professional whose pain, finances and the daily stress of life was too pervasive to even consider trying to disguise) by their colleagues. I remember alternately struggling with my own shame, empathy, judgement and admiration as I listened to their strong voices and yet felt embarrassed by the "whining" of the professor most impacted by gender and social class.

In my head, I kept saying to her, and myself "Have some pride, don't let it show, especially to them. We know it's tough but quit whining. Keep your chin up. Every kick is a boost." Later reading and talking to bell hooks (1995a), I recognized my own collusion with internalized shame and oppression. Glenda Russell (1996) named shame as a marker of internalized classism in therapy. Todd Erkel (1994) wrote about this process with those educated "professionals" in the article "The Mighty Wedge of Class." It is in vocalizing injustice that we begin the process of liberating ourselves from these chains and recognizing the intent of those who prefer us shackled.

Classism within Programs

Within each of the programs, students and faculty shared stories of oppression and resistance to classism. Some of the oppression was from faculty or the institutions that support programs, other examples were from student peers. Student resistance came from speaking out against injustice, exploitation, and a professionalism that required one to deny their roots and identity. Faculty resistance manifested itself in being sensitive to social class issues, being open to learning from students and pro-actively responding to student's needs. Students challenged that faculty needed to be provide more leadership in pro-active resistance to class discrimination.

Oppression

Student participants who identified themselves as coming from "working-class," "poor," "lower class" and even "lower middle class" poignantly shared experiences of classism within their programs. This participant reflected on the "'middle class' thing," a variation on the myth of sameness that assumes that all of our experiences are alike that pervades relationships in the programs, even in supervision. She alluded to the struggle of whether to "share that 'shame ball'" regarding her background. She challenged

assumptions that she might be "some young, white chick who has no clue." While she acknowledged that might be partly true, she challenged the lack of power that she had to "give voice" in protest to the "disservice to all those other parts of me."

> *I found myself ruminating about the . . . "middle class" thing . . . with a lot of emotion. Much is missed operating under that assumption even in supervisory relationships . . . not understanding that maybe you have a different experience, we all have a different experience masked by our advanced degrees or . . . whether we want to share that "shame ball." I've found myself assuming the supervisor thinks I'm just some young, white chick who has no clue, and maybe part of that is true, but I feel like he's doing a disservice to all these other parts of me and feeling like I can't give voice to that because of power issues.*

We have been taught that those with the greater power have the greater responsibility in supervision and therapy. It is the supervisor's responsibility to create an atmosphere of safety where might share this information as appropriate. What other parts contextual issues and systems mitigate against this atmosphere of sharing and safety? How do we resist these? How do we give voice to the degree we are able?

This next student voiced feeling shame in relationships with faculty with whom she had to "try harder." Admitting that she didn't know "how much of it comes from them and how much is me projecting," she felt misunderstood and wondered if she fit.

> *You asked about our relationship with faculty and, I, I can't say how much of it comes from them and how much is me projecting, you know, "do I fit or do I not fit, but I really struggled with that ...because the way I am, was just different. And I felt misunderstood and what it led to is me feeling like I had something to prove to the faculty even "Wait a minute, you're not really seeing me here!" and I think that shame kind of motivated me, uhm, to try to make a better connection and try to force them to see me for who I am and not. With faculty I had to try harder.*

How often do we see those who are different as deficient? Those who have more power as in this case faculty, also have the most responsibility for our assumptions. How does faculty actively work to confront the stereotypes received from society? How are

they reinforced in our programs? How are individuals with less power blamed for their "habits of survival" (Scott, 1988) under oppression. This reminded me of a student who talked about the need for more structure in the program. When the student courageously asked for some response to meet that need, the student was treated as if deficient. This student struggled with not internalizing the intended shame. How do we resist blaming people whose families have been socialized and forced to live with significant structures imposed on them who suddenly feel overwhelmed by the freedom and fluidity that has been sucked from the sweat of their parents' brows? There has to be flexibility for differing needs and awareness of how injustice has created these needs.

Students recounted experiences of classism from other students as well. This student participant shared an experience of trying to talk with another student who "literally looked down his nose" at her. She felt "almost paralyzed," wanting to "hang on to my roots but also fit in, be accepted and valued as an intelligent, capable person."

> *My first year here it was really difficult for me because there was a Ph.D. student who . . . literally looked down his nose at me, and uhm, it just brought all these images of, do I need a . . . middle to upper class person to accept me in order for me to belong? Or do I have to get rid of my roots, and cut myself off? And I don't want to right now, I'm not doing either so I'm kind of in limbo (Laughs) . . . almost paralyzed. Not really knowing where I fit, wanting to hang on to my roots but also fit in, be accepted, and valued as an intelligent, capable person.*

A faculty participant at one program shared her observations about the effect of class and race causing "some sense of alienation" from her peers with a student who had "really raised herself up," a "first timer."

> *for one student, social class has certainly caused some sense of alienation, part of it is, and it really is a kind of, uhm, race and you know, a poorness. . . . she really raised herself up . . . the first one in her entire family to have ever gone to University, you know. We do have a lot of first timers.*

I am curious about the comment about race because this participant didn't identify to which race she was alluding. I was pleasantly surprised about having a lot of "first timers." Was this a reference to students in the family therapy program? I wondered how many programs are aware of who in their programs are "first timers" or if there is an assumption that college is a normal part of family passages. The idea of this passage being an "up" and that this person "raised herself," almost an illusion to rugged individualism is noted, although I am not aware of the particular details of this story.

Not being able to talk about one's social class experiences, especially if those experiences are oppressive, is classism. The social rules that impose silence about finances, struggle and inequity often create barriers between colleagues and friends. This participant, aware of her own privilege of having a fellowship while her friends were "also having to juggle assistantships" as they were trying to complete the required 500 clinical hours took on more classes "because I was expected to" although she thought she "wouldn't manage." They never talked about what that "means to a relationship."

> There is such a taboo and . . . we don't talk about what's it like that, you know, I had a fellowship... and I watched my friends, their second year, doing their heaviest clinical work, trying to get those 500 hours, uhm, also having to juggle assistantships and I didn't. And I thought I wouldn't manage, but I took more classes because I was expected to and we never really talked about what that means to a relationship.

The attitude that "we have suffered so you need to suffer" pervades the hoops and hurdles that constitute our educational and academic journeys. The spirit of pain that accompanies that labored struggle "up" the ladder of "success" seems to permeate the atmosphere, seeming to render powerless those who now have the power to make a difference, to use their clout to make the journey more meaningful and less difficult. It is almost as if we have internalized the pain while deifying the suffering as a monument to

that pain. If we can't shout about the injustice, we can at least recruit initiates to worship at the idol of destruction.

Resistance

There are students and faculty who individually and together are refusing to continue internalizing the pain and colluding with the injustice of classism or oppression in whatever form. Recognizing the pain, becoming aware of the injustice, and naming it is the first step in this process. Speaking up as each of these participants have done is the next courageous step, first to oneself, then in safety with others and finally, taking reasoned risks with others. Using and sharing one's power to take action to change the injustice is the next step, and possibly deal with the reaction.

Many students complained about the internship process and wondered how to make it less oppressive. Changing the name to a residency, having a national selection day of candidates for sites, and other suggestions were discussed. Several students spoke out about that lack of stipend or salary associated with internships and saw their potential work as a source of exploited "free labor."

> people are like, "we don't pay anybody." And I'm thinking, but why don't you? There's a cynical part of me who thinks . . . that there's advantages to the field to not pay us. It floors me that, you know, to go as a Ph.D. . . . they want me to pay them to go to train other students. . . . like "limited pie" ideology, you know, there's just so much and we're keeping it for the real MFT's. . . . we're going to, you know, use you, and you really don't have a choice, honestly, because there's no where else you can go.

This next student participant discussed the exploitation of student teaching assistants. She recounted the story of emailing the vice-chancellor about the policy of the university canceling classes. His reply focused on the "on-campus students" acknowledging that "this inconveniences the non-residential students." Commenting on this privileging, she responded:

> *There's two points here, one, . . . you know, the graduate students aren't too fond of missing out on educational time that we pay dearly for, time that can never be recovered . . . and two, you know, a lot of our graduate students are the instructors . . . if you know that this policy inconveniences certain groups of people, one of which is heavily graduate students, maybe you need to look at your policy because graduate students are an enormously invaluable source of very low cost labor that the University could not function without things like teaching for a fraction of what the cost would be to hire faculty members.*

I initially may have misunderstood this example, thinking this student was privileging graduate students over undergraduate students. In addition to graduate students who work as teaching assistants for "a fraction of the cost" of faculty members, in some areas, it is the financially needy who live off-campus, undergraduate and graduate, who can't afford to live in the dorms and often pay board as well. (Except the few whose scholarships pay and/or expect them to live on-campus).

Another example of student exploitation that did not come up in the focus groups but has been a topic of conversation among student researchers is the issue of faculty acknowledgment of student research efforts in their own research. This project was more specifically geared towards therapy and supervision so questions about research were not developed. The professional code of ethics of AAMFT, however, does address this issue

This next student participant spoke out against "professionalization" and the goal of having a unified, "common identity" which "intersects with the deep values of our culture" as has been demonstrated with the expectation "United we stand" in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. She questioned whether "that's the only way we will be allowed to practice" and chose to resist by "shout[ing] about it in a lot of ways."

> *What does it means to be professionalized and how that really intersects with the deep values of our culture. Is professionalization something that we want? Or are we here because that's the only way we will be allowed to practice. . . . That's a big interest of mine and I shout about it in a lot of ways. Are you allowed to maintain any of your cultural sense or is the*

> *goal to become ' that unified thing" and I want to say what unified thing?*
> *Is that the goal? Because I didn't know that it was. . . . that whole*
> *conversation about professional identify and we have to have a common*
> *identity or we couldn't possibly work together.*

Many students felt that faculty was unaware of students' own social class struggles,

for example, wondering why students did not take advantage of AAMFT conferences or

lack of awareness or acknowledgement of the amount of debt that a particular student

might be incurring. This student echoed those concerns and suggested that although

many faculty were "particularly sensitive" people, perhaps their own "social economic

status" and/or being the "red-headed step-child" of funding might make it less likely that

they actually talked about the students' financial concerns.

> *while I think a lot of our faculty is particularly sensitive . . . they are not*
> *talking about " Hey, are you going to AAMFT? Are you going to try and*
> *present? Do you have enough money to go to the conference?" Like*
> *there's no conversation around what happens if that puts you in debt so*
> *badly that, you know, that you're really struggling to get back out. . . . this*
> *pittance scholarship for conferences is very abysmal. We are the red-*
> *headed step-child of funding ....*

This same student believed that the faculty, having the "greater power," was more

responsible for the atmosphere of the program. It was her perception that the financial

struggles of students, however, would probably be "student initiated." Yet, she also felt

that when made aware, the faculty was open to struggling with the issue.

> *the faculty is responsible for the atmosphere; with their greater power,*
> *they have the most responsibility . . . I feel reasonably confident that if we*
> *brought it up as a topic of conversation, that they'd be willing to struggle*
> *through that. My sense would be that it would be more student initiated,*
> *uhm, . . . but I feel fairly confident that the faculty would be open to that.*

Another student participant suggested that faculty did not talk about the students'

financial struggles because "things are assumed to be O.K. unless you come to me." This

supported the perception if students brought their concerns to the faculty, the latter would

"create space around them." Yet, this student felt that the faculty generally appeared "stuck" and did not seem to know how to address these raised concerns any more than the students whom the faculty would then ask "what do you think we should do?" or occasionally, "this is what I need you to do."

> *things are assumed to be O.K. unless you come to me ... students are saying, "Well, this issue . . . that effects me is not being addressed . . . the conversations are being initiated by the students and the faculty creates space around them. . . we're still kind of stuck in this place where the faculty are in no better position that we are to know what to do next, so they say, "What do you think we should do?" Uhm, and in some areas more sensitive than others to say, "Well, this is what I need you to do."*

Students reported that faculty often seemed at a loss for ideas to remedy situations nor did they often take any initiative to use their own positions to work towards remedies. This student felt there was "empathy" for students in difficult financial situations but "no pro-active attitude around it."

> *in my experience . . . there's been . . . empathy in the position, but there's not a whole lot of, "So, what are we going to do to make it different, there's no pro-active attitude around it.*

Other students, however, shared experiences of faculty's prompt actions to their requests. One student gave the example of realizing in the middle of the semester that it would be "impossible" to live on her quarter time assistantship. She went to the head of the department and felt that there was openness and sensitivity in response to her needs.

> *I got a quarter time assistantship, and . . . it was impossible for me to live because I was not getting help from home . . . I went to the head of the department and I said, I have to have a half time or otherwise I can't survive here. Even though it was almost in the middle of the first semester, they were willing to give me another assistantship; they were pretty sensitive in listening to my needs.*

Another faculty participant shared how she worked with a student to address her social class fears about the internship interviews.

> *I talked to a student I was interviewing about internships, and uhm, she comes from a lower-middle class background, and uhm we spent, you know, a lot of time talking about our relationship and uhm, even with the interviews there's an issue about class and how, you know, how she's going outside her class and how it feels to ask all those questions.*

Faculty participants shared how they were learning from their students as well. One program encouraged feedback from the students on their experience in the program and encouraged student support groups. One faculty participant shared their openness to learning from their students' challenges and experiences.

> *we have our students now who are really challenging us and it's wonderful. [There's] some growing to do around how to get heard in the larger community, so we listen and we teach, and we listen and we teach.*

What would be the danger of being sensitive to students' social class and other needs? Could responsive programs survive? Or is it necessary to have a classist attitude in order to be economically viable? To provide more financial aid monies on a sliding scale would require programs acknowledge that students do have different class backgrounds. How would the program respond differently to the voice of privilege? Do those who come from economically privileged backgrounds but find themselves now in the temporary position of financially struggling to meet the economic demands of the program, find themselves in positions to have a stronger voice, more of a sense of entitlement, and therefore, are more able to demand that their programs meet their needs than those students who come from a more economically challenged class backgrounds?

Do these latter students even question about their own sense of privilege and right to have access…? They have been socialized their whole lives, I know I have, to not expect those things because to have expectations is to risk disappointment in systems that routinely reward those who are more privileged and do so without justification. (The recent compensation of September 11th victims family members is an example when

people's lives are given a price tag according to their worth in society). Some students are

always cutting out the luxuries, jettisoning anything absolutely unnecessary for survival

that is not worth the additional stress, time, or more loan money.

Practice

Supervision and Social Class

> *Our students know that if I'm supervising them, then I'm going to be looking for some of these issues. . . . they might talk about this is a lower-class family, you know, uhm, African- American or might be a lower-class Italian family . . . when the families, uhm, are also having difficulty meeting their needs, you know, ...class definitely comes up ...definitely.*

In this section on clinical practice in their family therapy programs, faculty and

student participants discussed how social class issues are addressed in supervision and

how they are not addressed. In effective supervision, self of the therapist issues are

explored, social class-based assumptions about clients are challenged and attention is

focused on the not so subtle meanings behind language usage.

Self of the therapist

All of the programs worked with self of the therapist issues in varying degrees as part

of their supervision as faculty from several programs explained. This participant

mentioned exploring family of origin issues, especially concerning privilege, even before

seeing clients, laying the "groundwork" for awareness when therapy started.

> *One of the things that we do well is we put an emphasis on self of the therapist issues in terms of privilege even before they see clients. So they look at . . . their own family of origin which often brings up these issues ... the groundwork is there when the clients bring that into the therapy room; they are more aware of and are more likely to look at it.*

As part of the philosophy of another program the self of the therapist was

conceptualized as being multi-dimensional rather than the unitary "classical sense of the

self." This facilitated looking at multiple aspects of identity, privilege and oppression.

> *the philosophy of the program . . . lends itself to that, you know. We're constantly presenting self of therapist issues, you know, conceptualizing self as being multitudinous, and not in the classical sense of the self.*

Reflecting on her own therapist training, a supervisor at another program remembered the lack of supervision focused on self of the therapist issues around race, gender and class. As a black woman, only one of her supervisors would "go there" and bring up the issue of being "a black woman seeing white families." Even when she raised these issues herself, they were minimized.

> *Out of all my training, I had one supervisor that raised the issue of what it's like for me to be a black woman seeing white families. That's terrible. That is absolutely terrible. . . . "What's it like for you to sit with a Japanese family? What's it like from a class perspective, from a race perspective, from any perspective? I would raise these issues in supervision and felt like it was minimized, uhm, . . . in terms of the cases, my relationship with the client, but I was also dealing with my own therapy stuff and no one would go there, you know, the relationship that I felt safe enough to be in, no one would go there at all.*

Social class was one of the self of the therapist issues that elicited mixed responses when asked if it was addressed in supervision. One student stated:

> *my experience of my supervision is that I come in loaded with a certain direction ... and my supervisor has tried to engage with me around my concerns and sometimes pushed me in directions that I hadn't really been in but hasn't been towards social class....*

Another student participant reflected that she had "never really thought about social class in supervision." She readily saw how supervision could hinder her therapy if her own social class was not addressed or help her therapy if it was. Keeping in "mind the social class and background of the therapist that you're talking to and the clients that they're dealing with" had not "traditionally been discussed."

> *I never really thought about social class in supervision. . . . [if] a supervisor gives me advice . . . I'm gonna go and try to do this, but that doesn't really fit with coming from my social class. . . . uhm, even though the supervisor knows the social class of my client, because I've submitted*

that, it doesn't really fit coming through me, 'cause I've presented my social class to my client like this is who I am, this is what I'm about, this is how I see things. . . . an intervention coming through my supervisor it may be in a different, uhm, capacity, so it may not fit well. And if I ever get to become a supervisor . . . that would be something you would have to keep in mind when supervising students, or other therapists, that uhm, . . . you need to keep in mind the social class and background of the therapist that you're talking to and the clients that they're dealing with. It just . . . hasn't traditionally been discussed.

This faculty participant pointed out the complexity of class issues that "enter the therapy room with such a host of other things" when "recognizing power" between the therapist and client or perhaps the supervisor and supervisee. Yet, she acknowledged that social class was not something that she tried to "extract."

it's impossible to disentangle class from other issues where we're recognizing power. ... I mean, I might see that I might have more power, or a client might have more power, or a supervisee might have more power by virtue of, you know, class, or money but ...I mean I think it enters the therapy room with such a host of other things ...that are linked that it's not something that I extract.

Social class intertwines with race, gender, sexual orientation and "a host of other things," making it difficult to "extract" where one begins and one ends. While acknowledging that complexity of this task, as the previous student participant pointed out, it is very important to attempt to sort out these various lenses. It is important to understand the power differentials, privilege and oppression of each of these standpoints to understand the client or supervisee's experience as well as how our own lenses and experiences influence are supervision and therapy. Our positions of privilege often blind us to our classist, racist and sexist actions in therapy and supervision. While this is initially understandable, as Faunce (1990) suggested addressing feminists, therapists have a responsibility to attempt to 'walk the incident in our client's [or supervisee's shoes] to bring these issues to the "foreground of [our] awareness" and "acknowledge the

implications of our behavior." When we are willing to learn from those who have more experience with oppression and perspective on others' privilege, that we will "achieve understanding and clarity" as therapists, regardless of our sex.

> ... middle-class white women may find it more difficult than do poor women of color to keep class and race issues in the foreground of their awareness. Thus, we acknowledge the implications of our behavior if a client regards it as racist and/or classist, and we attempt to "walk the incident in our client's shoes" to achieve understanding and clarity. (Faunce, 1990, p.193)

Some therapists became aware of social class issues at an early age. This student became recognized her own "self-of the therapist" issues without supervision around social class. Growing up "within poverty" and also experiencing racism, she struggled with not bringing into the therapy room her socialization about having "something wrong with you" by being in the "lower class." She worked to check herself, attempting not to "impose my values" to "get out of that class."

> *I grew up in the lower class ... within poverty. ...I'm working with, uhm, ... families of African descent. ... I always try to check myself and not impose my values, because my thing in growing up was to get out of that class, to be able to not be in welfare, to not go to the store with the food stamps, to not have to have hand me downs from folks, uhm. ... I carried that value into therapy with me, you know, whenever ...I work with clients, it's like I want them to want more. And they may not, they still go "you know, ... I'm ok" and ... well that's crazy! And that's my socialization, you know, especially in the lower class. You get more and more pressure to get out of that class, you know, because there's something wrong with you if you're there, and you're reminded of that constantly.*

Another therapist who has "intimate knowledge of having come from a disparaged culture" felt an "affinity" with other cultures that are not valued "even though the reasons are totally different."

> *What it translates for me is that is that I always had a knowingness about another culture that I perceive of as being in the same position as my culture is, even though the reasons are totally different. I feel like I have*

> *an affinity with, something like intimate knowledge of having come from a disparaged culture.*

A student explained that as a "beginning therapist," (acknowledging her "class" or ranking within the program/profession), she saw her experiences with her clients with "a gendered" or " a racially colored" rather than "a class lens." When her clients did not show up for sessions she was more likely to wonder "did I screw up" rather then wondering if they could not afford the fee. She suggested the "onus" is on the therapist to bring up class issues rather than assuming the clients would be able to raise these issues.

> *As a beginning therapist, seeing my therapeutic experiences in my clients, it's a gendered lens, or it's a racially colored lens. It's not a class lens so when I have a client that cancels week after week after week. I'm not thinking, "Wow, I wonder if they can't really afford the fee?" I'm thinking, "Did I screw up, do they not like me, did I say something that they can't deal with?" Those are the first places that I go. ...And I wouldn't think that my clients should trust me enough to say, "You know, I'm not coming because I really can't afford the fee. I wouldn't expect them to have that conversation with me. If they do, great, but ... I feel like I need to have the onus to bring those up if I feel that it could be an issue ....*

Faunce (1990) reminded therapists that the "burden" of understanding the client's experience was on persons in "the more privileged position." Usually the therapist, because of the power in that role, is in the more privileged position. This puts "the onus" on the therapist as the previous student participant suggested.

> Ignoring class differences can be collusion or personal defensiveness . . . We may feel guilty and want to ignore these differing realities in the interest of maintaining a semblance of harmony. It is up to . . . the persons from the more privileged position to do more work toward understanding the client's experience so that the burden is not on the client. (p.193)

Faunce pointed out that these possibly different realities might be ignored "in the interest in maintaining a semblance of harmony" representing either "collusion" or "defensiveness." Recognizing our own classim is very difficult as it is with racism, sexism or heterosexism. We first must open ourselves to the pain of the other caused by

our unjust entitlement. We must acknowledge our privilege and deal with the shame of our blindness. We then must work to equitably share with those we have deprived.

Those who refuse to acknowledge class or other oppressions may use their power to impose silence to mask their own privilege. This "semblance of harmony" is an illusion. Those who are oppressed may be silent in interest of their own safety or silenced by internalized classism and shame to protect their own vulnerability. Harmony, however, does not exist. Pain and conflict is in the air, seething under the surface.

> *A woman in my own private practice who is an artist, uhm, is also receiving some aid from the state, has two kids, not married. A white woman who lives . . . in an African American-Latino community. . . . she really hasn't money. The men whom she has partnered with have always been men of means . . . but . . . they leave her devastated without resources. . . . friends from a middle-class or an upper-middle social, uhm, class background, they'll come to her house or they'll want to see her work . . . and she's ashamed of . . . what's she's become. She came from a family that was fairly affluent, uhm, . . . but she's now cut off from them . . . this is just one client, but it comes up every week in many different ways.*

From this next student therapist's experience, social class was an important issue. Being African American and mostly working with African American clients, she reported that they were "attuned to social class" differences. She observed that sometimes there are issues that "I might not understand or get right off the bat unless it's explained to me." She worked on getting those issues out in the open to process and discuss them.

> *My clients are attuned to social class because I work with mostly African American, uhm, clients and myself being African American, uhm you know, it's almost like they're looking for a difference, so it's always brought up. "Oh so you went to college". . . so I do bring that up and talk about social class. . . . I see it as important to discuss and I see how uhm, differences could impede or benefit. Uhm, there's gonna be some things that . . . I might not understand or get right off the bat, unless it's explained to me. So when those issues do come up, I try to process them, discuss them, get them out in the open, and talk about them.*

Social class assumptions

This faculty participant reported that social class did not come up enough in supervision and therapy. Because of social class assumptions, many important issues are missed. Drug use may be overlooked with families who are perceived to be upper class although alcohol use may be acknowledged. Language about this drug use changes according to social class, e.g., using terms such as "crack" versus "cocaine" with the former often laden with shame. Class issues such as buying one's drugs "in the city" are overlooked as well as race issues resulting in "missing" a lot of what is going on.

> *I don't think social class comes up enough . . . I see all kinds of ...*
> *perceptions because of class, being perceived as an upper-class family,*
> *not doing drugs at all. . . A case will be presented and there may be some*
> *talk about alcohol and yet, there's something being missed around other*
> *drugs. Another whole issue about class, getting drugs in the city and ...*
> *we all buy into the terms of the shame around if you use "crack" cocaine*
> *versus "cocaine." So, we talk about class quite a little bit in the substance*
> *abuse course because I feel strongly that we miss things because of our*
> *own perceptions. . . if we perceive clients to be in a certain area or a*
> *certain class. We're really missing a lot of the things that are going on.*

This student therapist from India told how she did not understand what social class her first client, a hunter, belonged to. The assumptions she might have used about class did not necessarily apply to the United States.

> *My first client (laughs) the husband was a hunter, and I was so stunned.*
> *You know, I didn't expect that and I don't know what class he belongs to*
> *here. To go out and hunt animals, I don't know whether it belongs to the*
> *lower class or upper class, or middle class, I don't know, because, well, I*
> *know in India if they belong to this occupation, they're all, uhm, this class,*
> *so it's hard for me to differentiate ... they still could be well paid because*
> *they are going out into the forest and so it's kind of hard for me. (Laughs).*

This faculty participant highlighted many of the class-based assumptions which therapists make about change: which families will and which will not. When students are "stuck" working with an overwhelmed family dealing with their family's daily needs and

stresses, students are pulled into an isomorphic process, sometimes deciding not to

"invest a lot of energy" into these families. They "get hopeless and give up, too."

> *The students in our program make assumptions based on class about who's going to change and not going to change. . . . someone might feel like they are stuck working with a family . . . who really doesn't have a lot of energy leftover working on doing what they need to do within their family. I've worked with students who, uhm, sort of get hopeless and give up, like, "I'm not going to really invest a lot of energy into it" . . . . a lot of that has to do with, uhm, their perception about who these people are.*

A faculty participant echoed the concern about class-based assumptions about "who

these people are." These assumptions center around race and neighborhoods.

> *class often comes up around the problems families have . . . or the settings they're in. There was this white family, I mean, drugs everyone in the family, but because the family lived in a very, you know, uhm, upper-middle class neighborhood, uhm, nobody even thought of that. . . . I'm looking at the tape and I'm like, you know, you're talking about all of this but nobody has said that these people are addicts, you know, why is that? (Laughs). So, class may come up that way . . . about our perceptions about who are drug users, you know, and class is one of them, who has, uhm, single parents, or you know, uhm, children without, uhm, being married; class comes up a lot around those issues in supervision ...*

Further elucidating, the same participant challenged the different class-based

assumptions about "ethnic minority families" and "white families." Criminals are

assumed to be "black and lower class." Blacks and Latinos are assumed to not be

educated rather than coming "from families who have anything." Whites who are judged

as lower class are assumed to have grown up around minorities. Meanwhile, the issues

that whites "of means" have, were ignored.

> *we assume class when it comes to, uhm, ethnic minority families. I don't think we assume that as much with, uhm, white families. . . . the criminal is mostly, uhm, seen as black and lower class. . . . issues are missed in terms of . . . people of means . . . you might have some whites more than likely they'll be assumed to be lower class, you know, who probably grew up, you know, (laughs) around minorities . . . there's just an assumption made off the bat about those people as well as there's an assumption that*

> *the blacks or the Latinos may not come from families who have anything, or who might be educated. Things are missed that way as well.*

Addressing the social class issues of the African American clients that she worked with, this faculty participant discussed the struggles and burdens that clients who have "risen" in social class had, including feeling like they were the saviors of their families.

> *With some of the black clients that I have, uhm, . . . issues of class a lot of times deal with the image, you know, . . . of their constructed view of who they are, you know, and the constructed view of who their families see them as . . . you know, once they have risen. . . . sometimes the, the burden for African Americans . . . is that sense of having to be the savior . . . the emphasis that people put on, you know, what they had and they're burdened by it, and so that's how it comes up, uh, with some of my, uh, African American clients, uhm, and with white clients.*

Focusing on couples' issues, this participant always asked about family backgrounds and how people "might have seen themselves socially." Social class issues often emerged both in the differing lifestyles of each of the partners when there is divorce, especially with women, as well as addressing social class differences within the couple that "that they haven't talked about."

> *When women are divorced . . . it's really a marked difference in their lifestyle, uhm, and it comes up in fighting over the money, you know, in terms of, uhm, whose lawyer will fight to keep the kids. . . . That's how social class is often dealt with. I generally will ask, you know, about family backgrounds and, you know, how they might have seen themselves socially . . . because, you know, a lot of times there's differences with a couple, uhm, though they haven't talked about it.*

Language and social class

The issue of language and social class came up in regards to therapy and supervision. This faculty participant struggled with students who did not recognize the class implications in their privileging of "insight, insight, insight." This supervisor recognized that as an insensitivity to social class and educational access. She also had a problem with the language, "multi-problem family."

> *class and . . . education, . . . there are certain therapists who will stand in my, you know, face and say, the change has got to do with insight, insight, insight and . . . they're talking about class. They only want to work with people who have the insight, to be able to change them. Every time they say that to me, I'm thinking, what is this really about . . . but it isn't just intellect. It's the freedom, it's the privilege. . . . But trying to say that people don't have insight, say with a "multi-problem family." I have difficulty with it when they say multi-problem family; . . . it's languaging.*

While this participant did not elucidate her concerns about "multi-problem family," my experience is that this is coded language for "poor," problematic" and "low class" families. It often carries the baggage of race as well.

This faculty participant confronted the use of class and race-based language as well. Using "stay at home dads" as an example, she compared the different images conjured up with white families with fathers who stay at home to take care of the children versus black families with fathers who stay at home to take care of the children. The latter are often referred to as "dead-beat dads." Both images are associated with differential race, social class and status.

> *Language is so important. I was looking at television and, uhm, it was a story on men who stay at home. And they're stay at home dads but they have a wife. Black men are dead beat dads when you have that … so again that constructs this view of class, you know, in terms of a family. For that white family, you know, the mother's working and that family is given some status because of the language that's used to describe them, where with this, you know, black family, is, uhm, certainly assigned a different station, uhm, based on that, …the whole notion of class as opposed to connection and you know, relationships. And for us as a field about relationships, to buy-into that … it's dreadful.*

A student participant pointed out the strategic use of language, including it's use in relationships, social distance and empathy.

> *language is strategic, uhm, . . . evasive and generally vague on purpose. It's easier to talk in generalities that it is to be specific. And it's easier not to empathize if you're generalizing.*

Louis Lapham (1988), in *Money and Class in America,* commented on language use and social class. From his observations, "nice" language is used to describe the rich, and preferably showing a distance between theselves and money. Plain and direct language is reserved for "others" of lesser status. The "poor" are spoken of with either pity and contempt. "Language of vagueness" is used to hide the bases of power

The nation bestows it's highest literary gifts on those authors who "preserve the illusions of innocence." Lapham (1988) quoted G.K. Chesterton who said the primary use of science was "to provide long words to cover up the errors of the rich." (p. 127).

This student participant talked about the use of words such as "doctor" or "expert" and how they impeded a therapeutic relationship of collaboration.

> *it gets in the way of the relationship with the client because you see yourself as "the doctor." You're an authority figure, "the expert" as opposed to "let's work on this problem together and brainstorm here. I've read a few more books but you had some life experience to bring to this."*

Therapy with Cross-Class Clients

This section on practice focuses on therapy with cross-class clients, from a different class than the therapist's class. Participants commented on issues of accessibility for clients with limited access to resources as well as both what they have learned from and the difficulty relating to differently classed clients.

Accessibility

Both student and faculty participants commented on the issues of social class, access and accessibility for clients with fewer material resources. This student participant acknowledged the difficulty for such clients to find the time to access community resources because of the time working ("two jobs to make ends meet') or the distance traveled to work. She also pointed out the lack of protection many of these families have

against "intrusions" - the unwanted access of system in their lives as compared to the upper class who "have the type of resources to shield themselves."

> I see social class coming up in access, uhm, access to community events or . . . community supports. People in the lower-class, it's . . . hard for them to make some of those connections based on where they live, the distance it takes to . . . the work that they're doing. . . . they may be working, you know, two jobs to make ends meet. Uhm, and on the other side, is the access of what comes into the family, . . . how many systems are involved in people's lives. . . . the lower-class you are, the more systems are going to be intruding in your lives. They don't have the resources to protect themselves against these intrusions while people in the upper-class have resources to shield themselves away from some of the systems.

This student participant reported that while they get "a lot of lower income, economic status" clients at their clinic because they have the "lowest sliding scale in town," nonetheless, none of these clients were on pubic assistance.

> as a clinic, we get a lot of lower income, economic status because we have the lowest sliding scale in town [and] a number of like, single moms who really skate on thin ice, but I haven't had any who were, you know, on public assistance.

Another student participant remarked that even though a few of her clients were impoverished, they had enough resources to get to the clinic. Acknowledging that she has also helped with bus fares, rides or met them elsewhere, she believed that "If we were really going to revolutionize therapy, we would be doing a lot more in-home and … trying to take on Medicaid."

> the people that we get have enough money, enough access to resources, that they get here. . . . I've helped people with rides or bus fares, or met them at other places, but if we were really going to revolutionize therapy, we would be doing a lot more in-home and . . . trying to take on Medicaid.

Another student noted that even though the "powers that be" were working to get services out in the community, for example, by funding an assistantship to help her get to

community centers, she didn't see that people would be "likely to come here anyway because it's not welcoming."

> *In the black community the university is "up there," . . . this "higher" entity. So, even if it were accessible, people wouldn't be likely to come here anyway because it's not welcoming. . . . if we were pro-active about getting out there and really being interested in having people here, then accessibility wouldn't be as big a problem. . . . some of that is happening . . . but I don't think it's out there enough. . . . whatever other powers that be have been working to try to get, uhm, this program out in the community a little bit more and . . . they've made me a stipend, you know, and I get out into the community centers, . . . but other than that, I can't see any of the people that I work with even fathoming coming here for anything.*

Still another Spanish-speaking student participant raised the issue of language, respect and accessiblity for Spanish-speaking clients. She found a supportive faculty participant and translated the forms. With faculty's help, she worked on paperwork that would bring therapy to the impoverished Spanish speaking areas, though they ran into roadblocks.

> *When I got to the clinic, uhm, all the forms and the assessment were in English. . . . about this idea about language and respect for our clients and . . . . making them are capable of reading the consent forms. . . . I said, "This is not OK." And I did the translation of everything. The faculty person was very open . . . I said, "You know when my clients are not coming and I'm fed up and, and we need to do something about that, and I talked to some people down in the Spanish speaking community and they said they need therapy, they need it badly. So, I talked to [same faculty person] and I said, "What about making a placement site down there? . . . the Spanish speaking areas . . . which is very impoverished and she said, "Great, yeah, sure." And she helped me with lots of paperwork that is involved with that . . . one step forward, one backward. The University takes a long time to sign the papers . . . that is talking about the power that this place has in allowing us to go into the community.*

Finally, one student participant put the whole question of access and therapy in perspective for people who "are worried about putting food on the table."

> *thinking about therapy, there is a very, I mean, working class idea . . . . When you are worried about putting food on the table, it's really irrelevant whether you make it to therapy or not.*

Learning from cross-class clients

Participants commented on the education they and their students were getting from working with clients from different social classes, especially clients from working-class backgrounds. This faculty participant shared his experience of helping students reframe their in-home therapy with families who "literally don't open the door." Students became more "humble in respecting these families' … context"- the lack of power and control.

> therapists go out and families . . . literally don't open the door. . . . the usual first response is, "they are not ready to do therapy." Or they interpret it as resistance. And then to learn . . . uhm, that it has something to do with privilege and with control and that their entrance door is one of the few things that families can control and whether they, uhm, can welcome somebody into their home. And to reflect on that in a different way rather than, "Oh, they don't want to work." O.K., so if they don't want to work, what can I do? It's easier to find clients that want to work with you. You always want to work on my territory, my social context, rather than the others' social context. . . . they become more humble in respecting these families' social context which is that of lack of power and lack of access to resources.

This next faculty participant recalled the importance of his own training doing in-home therapy and how "class issues would come up all the time." The "scope of therapy" included case management, "the real life stuff that we don't do as therapists."

> class issues would come up all the time . . . someone would be expressing concern for rent and groceries, you know, or a really bad problem with mice, and they didn't have the money . . . so, going and securing funding from an agency so we could do some constructive change. . . . you would do all the in-home therapy because it was a training institution like this. There was no office. And the scope of therapy was supposed to include… case management, which is usually all the real life stuff that we don't do as therapists, as part of our job.

My training included case management, doing it myself and closely working with a case manager. I have found it invaluable in making me aware of the needs of clients, the available resources in the local community and professional collaboration.

Another faculty participant shared another "great lesson" learned about resources when working with financially struggling clients, resources that are often over-looked.

> they start to see that . . . some of these families have incredible resources
> . . . that have nothing to do with money. . . . they come out of this with
> tremendous lessons themselves about the resources that these clients have
> and the hard work. I mean, people who get to this intervention even
> though they have two jobs, and they can only take an hour and a half off,
> at a loss in pay, to come to try to help their kid, I mean, this is commitment
> beyond what they're used to ... thinking about.

Admitting how difficult it was because of her privileged white, middle-upper class upbringing, this participant shared how her "view of privilege" was challenged in supervision. She learned about her lack of awareness.

> It was difficult for me at first . . . because of my background being white,
> from a . . . middle-upper class upbringing, and having my view of
> privilege and not being aware of, uhm, people who belong to social
> classes that are not middle-upper class. . . . it was a lot of learning.
> People who are lower socio-economic status are more aware of the
> discrepancies between themselves and people of higher social classes. So,
> it was kinda like a moving backwards. I had to learn so much because I
> was unaware of so much.

Another faculty participant pointed out the importance of life experience in awareness issues about social class, even for students from more privileged backgrounds. Her experience was that "the younger you are the less likely you're aware of how these issues impact anything."

> students are from pretty wealthy families, but [others] are poor and . . . a
> lot of our other students are neither, I mean, they are not really wealthy,
> they aren't. But what I find makes a difference is life experience and if
> you're talking about working with a, a graduate student who's much
> younger, that's a different experience than working with a graduate
> students who have lived a life and actually had experiences of varying
> levels of economic success. . . . and they have also seen more uhm,
> experience of other people dealing with class issues. The younger you are
> the less likely you're aware of how these issues impact anything.

Noting she needed to do "quite a bit of containment of the despair" initially when therapists begin working with incarcerated youth and their parents, this faculty participant reported that therapists opened their eyes to "a totally different world" which challenged "a lot of the ways that people are thinking."

> *this intervention with incarcerated adolescents and their parents . . . most of whom are either Hispanic or Black and very often, very, low, lower, lower class. The first couple of weeks I have to do quite a bit of containment of the despair that the therapists are feeling about what it is like away from here seeing, you know, white couples who are, you know, having some difficulties compared to these families where somebody comes in and says, you know, this week what we're dealing with is that our son got shot, I mean, it's just a totally different world. That has certainly changed a lot of the ways that people are thinking. . . .*

Relating to cross-class clients

Participants shared their experiences including their difficulty relating to clients of a different class and learning how to bridge those social class differences. This next participant was unusual in her ability to understand clients from very different social classes. This therapist explained how she was able to relate to clients from both ends of the social class spectrum as she knew "going to Taco Bell and not having enough,…but I also know going to five star restaurants, …nice dresses and the finer things in life."

> *I have that ability, to either, you know, play social class up or play it down, and I know where they are coming from, both sides. . . . I know going to Taco Bell and not having enough, you know, but I also know going to five star restaurants, wearing really nice dresses and the finer things in life. On one hand it's like, it's kind of a hindrance because I feel like I'm not being true all the time, and on the other hand, . . . it does helps me relate to different clients.*

Few participants reported experiencing such a radical shift in social class. This student talked about her difficulty connecting to and having sympathy for the middle class and upper class clients that she worked with given her own childhood experiences

of worrying about the phone bill and food on the table. At times she felt, "Oh, you don't

know what problems are."

> growing up and how that influences how we . . . as a therapist might react
> to, uhm, our own clients, something that came to mind was [when] the
> biggest worry is about paying the phone bill, you don't care about
> communication. (Laughs). You just worry about, like are we going to
> have food, the government stamps, are they going to come on time so that
> my kids don't have to starve or whatever? And those are the struggles . . .
> as a professional working with clients that are mostly middle class, you
> know, upper class, then you kind of have a little less sympathy for some
> their problems . . . it's somewhat harder for me to, uhm, really connect
> with some of the more well off clients ... with someone who's never really
> had, in my mind, my personal background, a real struggle. I mean it's
> hard for me to really conceive and relate to them on the same level and
> connect with their issues and views because I'm like, "Oh, you don't know
> what problems are." (Laughter).

This next student had the opposite problem. Having lived a life of privilege she found

it frustrating that clients did not try harder to work on the "finer things in life." At first,

she concluded, "they don't want to work."

> It's the other way down for me. I've grown up in always a middle, upper
> class, uhm, family so I have had the privileges and it's really hard for me
> to, uhm, relate to people who are not looking at those finer things in life.
> It's like, you know, "so why aren't you looking at these, you know, you
> need to be looking at them . . . how you are relating, why can't you have
> more love," you know? All those finer things, so it really frustrates me
> because . . . the first thing I relate it to is, they don't try enough, they don't
> want to be there, they don't want to work.

A supervisor who identified herself as a white, middle class woman acknowledged her

"reverse snobbism" that she "had to be careful" and deal with. She had "internalized this

loyalty to lower-middle class clients" and noticed that she was "not comfortable treating

people with a lot of wealth."

> As a white woman who identifies herself as middle-class, . . . I've kind of
> internalized this loyalty to lower-middle-class, uhm, clients. . . . I notice that
> I'm not comfortable treating people with a lot of wealth . . . I have to be
> careful and, and deal with it. In supervision, if I feel like it's kind of
> indulgent . . . that they're worried about the stock market falling or

something, uhm, so I know that I have those kinds of, you know, perceptions and really almost prejudices. It's kind of a reverse snobbism . . . I have that, uhm, loyalty to a lower middle-class, so, I'm not sure exactly where my heart is, except that I know I've simplified my life . . we moved to a very, very, uhm, simple house. . . . it's an interesting dualism going on with me around that and, what is class anyways? Is it values, money, education?

I found it refreshing that participants would acknowledge their loyalties, connections and discomfort working with different classes of clients. It is when people bring these issues to awareness that they can sort out the self of the therapist/supervisor issues. I love working with working-class clients of all races, though as a white person, I have more experiences with white working-class families. I rarely have difficulty connecting with and having empathy for clients of any social class. I often feel less relaxed initially working with upper class clients but by the end of the first session I find connections. I do find myself more at a loss with dilemmas that are outside my range of experience, both actual and vicarious. I am sometimes flabbergasted by lifestyles and financial expenditures that I cannot begin to comprehend.

This student participant, as a white therapist, commented on her fear of offending her clients who have experienced "more pressures or oppression" and her desire to relax and not allow this fear to restrain her work.

Being white, I have a certain measure of accountability to clients that have experienced more pressures or oppression Sometimes that sensitivity to not wanting to offend ... you want to talk about but because of that awareness, not wanting to just crash into it and ... being hyper-aware on my part and I need to let go of a little bit so there's not so much of a fear that would restrain me.

Many participants talked about the importance of dialogue in helping them bridge the gap between their own and their client's experience. Kathy Weingarten (1995) called this

suspension of one's own or the dominant cultural beliefs in order to hear the client's experience from their perspective "radical listening" (p.7). This participant reflected on the importance of dialogue for her to be involved with her clients, understand their experience in spite of her privilege and learn from them.

> *Understanding other people's experience, and . . . dialoging is such a big part of the therapy process for me, because I'm always trying to go back and learn because I just didn't know so much when I first started. . . . although I have learned much more, I still belong to that social class and I still have a place of privilege, and it's very easy to get caught up in that, you know what I mean? I constantly have to be working at it, involved in it and dialoging is the best way for me to be involved . . . and also to learn.*

This student participant underscored the importance of effective supervision in that process of dialogue. She learned from her client's story who learned from her story. She then brought this dialogue back to supervision when two different supervisors helped her to further broaden her perspective, one through cultural knowledge and the other through more conversations. Both helped her to "see things in an entirely different way then I ever saw it before."

> *When I go into therapy with a client, I definitely believe that we both have our own life experiences . . . and our own stories that we bring into the room. My story will definitely affect their story, and theirs will definitely affect me. . . . conversations will facilitate more conversations and open up the dialogue, uhm, and then I bring that back to my supervision. In each supervision . . . it's very different because one supervisor has a really big knowledge base of other cultures . . . so he's a really good resource. I have another supervisor, we just, you know, have conversations which even after I leave supervision . . . . it helps me to see things in an entirely different way then I ever saw it before.*

This next participant described that process of dialogue as slowly unpacking the suitcases that are brought into the room with the client and therapist.

> *you achieve a certain level of intimacy with your client when you engage in a dialogue about those subjects. My experience to this point has been very positive . . . I have always visualized it as two suitcases that we bring in there, you know, kinda sitting between us, and we slowly unpack them,*

> *we go through what's in them, and you learn so much about one another.*
> *. . . that experience is so helpful for the client because they can then*
> *transfer that outside of the room*

If seen as resources, these suitcases are "unpacked" as appropriate for the therapy.

Usually the client's suitcase is unpacked more, sometimes the client might say, "No, you

go first." Other clients could barely care less what's in your suitcase. Sometimes the

focus is getting a client to care about what is in someone else's suitcase or it suggesting

that more attention be focused on the contents of one's one suitcase or it respecting the

closures on another suitcase. It depends on the therapeutic relationship that is negotiated

and the work to be done.

> *I am from a white middle class, uhm, background and I work with clients*
> *who are African American . . . on public assistance and there's a very big*
> *class difference as well as, uhm, a racial difference there. It's something*
> *that I really bring into the therapy, and address because it affects how*
> *they perceive me, how I perceive them, and how we work together towards*
> *certain goals. And I have had a lot of experience where clients come in*
> *and question my motivation. Why am I there? How do I think I can help*
> *them? I like to engage them in a discussion . . . and process that because I*
> *think it's a wonderful learning experience . . . when we learn about each*
> *other and we teach one another about each other. So I really see the*
> *intersection with social class and race when I'm doing therapy. I've had*
> *clients be so surprised that I've come out and said, you know, lets talk*
> *about how this affects you as an African American, you know, . . . they've*
> *just been so taken aback that they've actually then even opened up a little*
> *bit more. Uhm, they don't expect that you would address that.*

My own experience is if your own oppression is not acknowledged and validated , you

can't "talk about it" bring it up, or access it for its wisdom, both the similarities and

differences … so we act as if we bring no experience into the room when we are actually

denying our own experience. That is not to say that we should assume that our

experience is the same as another's. Rather, it is a mutual point of embarkation – how is

it alike? How is it different? Oh, I didn't realize that it was like that. Or, no, wow, I've

never experienced something like that. What is that like for you?

People of the same social classes are limiting their experience. Everyone is so unique, we all need to get in there and understand some of those experiences. It's such an intimate and kinda wonderful process, and it's amazing, people's reactions when you actually sit and talk about it, where as it's been something that's been so stiff and tight before and you just don't speak about it, especially with someone of another social class.

Circular, Systemic Reflexivity

In this chapter, faculty and student research participants shared their reflections about social class issues in their profession, programs, and practice through their lenses as educators and professionals. I will summarize and discuss the findings in this last section and highlight the need for circular, systemic reflexivity.

Summary

Students discussed their perspectives on family therapy's struggle for identity in the "social class" hierarchy of mental health practice. As one research participant described it "where we fit in." This discussion reflected their ambivalence about this ranking. On the one hand, there was a concern about the lack of status in the mental health field for family therapists as evidenced by lack of paid internships, lack of cooperation among programs or a national "placement" day as psychology students have to find appropriate placement sites. Students also felt that with family therapy's own "limited pie ideology, " that leaders in the profession were more focused on and concerned about family therapy's place on the professional rung rather than looking out for and enabling students to compete. Students gave the examples of the assumption that to get ahead it was important to attend national conferences, present at workshops and posters sessions, and to write and publish. Yet there was very little monies allocated in programs to support students' efforts in these arenas. The monies that were available were inadequate for those students without independent financial means. Thus, the social hierarchy was

maintained in the training programs. Those who had the financial resources would rise more quickly to leadership positions within the profession.

In several programs, several students also talked about the implications of professionalization for class identity. One student talked about the socialization that goes on with the assumption that emerging professionals will take on a middle-class identity and leave behind their "class of origin." This student talked about how she actively challenged this assumption. Another student who had experience as a supervisor-in-training talked about the assumption of "professional" dress being middle-class or even upper-middle class clothing even when the client was not middle-class. This may speak to a previous theoretical stance of therapist as expert that may not be as relevant in some theoretical models. Clothing continued to reflect an older model.

Participants discussed class ranking within the family therapy programs and its surrounding context. Participants pointed out ranking among universities and programs, and within and among faculty, students, and support staff. Faculty and students described their perceptions of each other's social class and the implications of that for the program.

Faculty described the philosophies of their programs from the perspective of social responsibility, being aware of and teaching about power. privilege, oppression, and socially constructed identities. Most faculty reported that social class was discussed both in courses and supervision. Some students felt that social class was another oppression "on the list" mentioned but not really talked about. No program reported any course specifically focused on social class although one program had a unit of study focused on social class with an paper assignment to do a personal social class genogram. Other participants pointed out a few of the "exceptions:" the way social class was honestly

faced, discussed and acted on in the programs such as the commitment to provide sliding scale services, the desire to seek more accessible settings, a faculty person's sensitivity to classism and it's impact on a student or a colleague.

Faculty members reported the intentional use of in-home therapy to sensitize therapists to other class realities other than their own. The need to do "containment" of depression/hopelessness as therapists encounter these realities was an essential part of one training program. Many expressed concerns about the lack of access to some in-house programs by those with limited resources, sometimes by transportation or association with a location that is "higher" class or housed in an atmosphere that might not reflect the diversity of experiences of working-class/poor clients. Students in programs that did not offer "in-home" therapy training as part of their regular program remarked on its absence or in their own gratitude to faculty who either supported their placement in community agencies or who used their own connections to make viable individual placement options.

Faculty and students expressed awareness of class-linked issues such as class blindness in accessing drug abuse, the influence of classism and it's effect on support staff and clients, and the strategic use of class-loaded language. Yet, there was a strong sense that class-based assumptions continued to dominate the programs as the images of class seemed to focus on people of color and "the poor."

Supervisors in these programs did initiate conversations about social class; they do bring "it" up. As one student participant pointed out, however, for many faculty it was not their first "port of call" unless there was an obvious connection. Participants were not sensitive to the more invisible or hidden layers of social class beyond their own

experiences. Many students in particular discussed the sense of pain, shame and internalized oppression that was often reinforced in the programs that led to student silence about social class oppression. Many did not have the vocabulary and framework to examine their experiences from a class perspective. A poignant example was shared by a student who recalled the pain when a supervisor did not realize the student's struggling working-class family background and assumed that because of white privilege that this student needed to learn about oppression. This faculty member did not listen to the student's attempts to share otherwise, invalidating this student's personal experience.

Students at many programs felt the faculty was unaware of or did not address the concerns of those students who felt overwhelmed by economic worries and concerned about the viability of their financial futures under "mounds of debt." Students from several programs volunteered that while it might take students to bring up these issues, they believed that faculty in general were sensitive and they would be able to idenify particular faculty persons to be supportive. The perception was if students identified an issue, brought to the attention of faculty and proposed a viable solution, faculty would support the students. Most voiced a lack of leadership initiative in this area from faculty. Many students and faculty, however, were providing resistance both silently and visibly, to the classism within the profession, programs and practice of family therapy.

I wondered about social class and self of the supervisor issues. Many supervisors were aware of the visibility and/or influence of their identities, issues and previous experiences. As one supervisor exclaimed when I asked if supervisees were aware of the social class issues of their supervisors:

> *Oh, God, everybody is aware of every one of my issues. ....Am I not right? (Laughs again). If I have an issue, you're going to hear about it.*

Several faculty members in a number of programs suggested that the focus group was the first experience that many of them had hearing each others social class stories. Until an atmosphere is created for faculty members to safely share these "tender" and wonderful experiences, students will not feel comfortable sharing their own stories and exploring their own agendas around these issues.

Finally, students and faculty both shared stories of doing therapy with cross-class clients. People related how clients had opened the therapist's eyes about resourcefulness, the struggles that many clients face, the privilege they may have and life in general. Participants also shared the difficulties and the joys of working with clients from a different class background. Many shared the use of collaborative dialogue to bridge the differences and provide a doorway into a unique perspective on and in the world.

Overall, the participants in the programs reported that they were in the midst of the process of becoming more aware of privilege and oppression around social class issues. Faculty and students seemed to be very aware of social class issues as they impacted clients who had been most oppressed by society: the "poor."

Replication of Social Hierarchy

Family therapy programs often reflect rather than mold social expectations. Social class exposes itself through the ranking systems within the educational institutions and the access to resources via funding (sometimes overt, sometimes covert) such as salaries, tuition, assistance to attend conferences, etc. The education ranking includes the hierarchy of each institution, department, or program directors, faculty, supervisors, students, and support staff. Among the faculty status-ranking is reflected economically, by salary, privileges and by clients that are seen, status in the professional community, and other connections. Student rankings, both those imposed and perceived, are often the

cause of stress and anxiety as well as the source of feelings of belonging, worth and respect. The ranking includes support staff both administrative and cleaning whom are often invisible members of the hierarchy.

Social hierarchy is maintained in the programs and the profession by not providing students with greater financial needs equal access to the resources. The "haves" more quickly rise to leadership, replicating the hierarchy of power. Students who come from more privileged backgrounds often have greater access and feel more entitled to claim access to faculty that less privileged students. Those who grew up with less privilege and access feel less entitlement and feel more pressure to prove and distinguish themselves from the negative assumptions propagated by the dominant discourse. Financial rewards based on merit often privilege those who already have greater privilege in terms of types of schools attended, ability to focus on school full time rather than employment, and access to technology and resources. Unacknowledged social class differences mask inequality and unequal access, indirectly supporting classism.

Professional dress is a way to mark professional identity. Related accessories to clothes include items such as make-up, tattoos and although not mentioned in this study, briefcases, "daytimers," etc. Other external professional markings include skin color/race, sex/gender and age. These external signs are an invitation to power and privilege while colluding with exploitation, oppression, denial of privilege, and the manufacture of myths and assumptions. These external signs mark the active presence of capitalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy. Professional dress demarcates a boundary from the working-class. Those professionals from more privileged backgrounds are

welcomed home to a space of privilege. Those from the working-class are asked to cut themselves off from and deny their class of origin.

Class within the mental health professions is defined both by the clientele (have or have nots) and the work site (private practice, agency, the client's home or "the streets.") as well as the freedom to define the type of work done (case management or type of therapy). The more privileged the client, the more control over the site and type of work the practitioner has, the higher the status of this discipline. The higher the status, the higher the income, and the more likely the profession is dominated by white males. Family therapy while primarily populated by women, has a majority of male leaders.

Being a "professional" was reported to have more status for some groups while for others, the money was more important or the opportunity to have an occupation without the hardships associated with manual labor. For some groups, the status of being in a doctoral program was more important than being a marriage and family therapist. Higher education was more important than being a professional, especially for those in lower status professions traditionally associated with women and lower pay. Groups that were not traditionally associated with the upper class seemed to value education and being a professional while groups more commonly associated with the working-class, women, and people of color seemed to value money and job benefits more than the status. Money and job benefits may be the first priorities of survival for these groups while others that already have these privileges are more interested in the additional status associated with "higher" education and "higher" professional occupations.

Social rules

Often unwritten social rules mark the boundaries of expected "professional" or academic behavior of both faculty and students. Social rules impose silence about

privilege and mask oppression such as finances, struggles, and inequality, creating barriers on the continuum of privilege. Those barriers, especially when ignored and not acknowledged, impact relationships between colleagues, students and faculty.

The longer or "higher" into the program is a professional or academic, the more socialized into those rules and the more expectations there are to "honor" the rules in exchange for the privileges including status that is accorded the rule follower. There is also random praise for those who follow and random punishment for those who do not follow these expectations. Students report that professors are nervous about the discipline or lack of discipline of students (both academically and professionally) and how that reflects on them. Students often protect themselves and the faculty from the risks that may incur for trespassing against the rules.

Resistance

Resistance includes a continuum process of becoming aware of pain (one's own and others), recognizing the connection of oppression and injustice, naming it, speaking up, speaking out and other risk-taking actions that challenge power and privilege. Loyalty to one's class of origin, learning from students (defiance of ranking), and pro-actively responding to student's needs (using power and privilege in service of those without) are examples of resistance. Responsibility to create an atmosphere of safety. Recognition of the expectation that the marginalized need to "try harder." Those who are different are deficient and are blamed for their habits of survival.

Those who resist the social rules covertly or overtly risk punishment. The professional who transgresses risks belonging, status, and access to power, privilege, and resources. This may range from being marginalized (a step or "illegitimate" "child" within the profession) or expulsion from the "protected" boundaries of membership.

One of the markers of collusion with internalized oppression is shame. By naming and vocalizing injustice, the process of liberation from these chains and making visible the power and privilege of those who benefit from oppression and exploitation is begun. The social contexts in which each of the programs is embedded contributes to the ability/freedom of the program to really examine and resist the dominant class discourse.

Costs of privilege

While there are privileges bestowed for conforming to the social rules, social capital is also demanded in return, e.g., loyalty to the class of aspiration and its values, assumptions and myths rather than the class of origin. An assumed value may be the willingness to accept staggering debt to complete one's degree. This has not traditionally been a working-class value as this could risk a family's survival as well as most working-class family's have not traditionally had access to large sums of loan money. In addition to these expectations, there are other costs, e.g., the gooey glue of privilege gum up the ability to see and name oppression, because to name oppression risks losing privilege.

To facilitate blindness, stories are told to mask privilege and inequity. The myth of the middle class is another version of the myth of sameness that encourages a blind eye to material differences, power and privilege and draws attention away from those who most benefit from exploitation and oppression: the elite. This myth of sameness is replicated by the unexamined expectation that to become a profession is to look like, think like, share the values, and become the model professional.

Some of the class-based stereotypes about poor/working-class people that are under girded in these myths include assumptions that such people are deficient. Poor/working-class people are often stereotyped as violent, drug users, thieves, unable to change, and often-single parents with children born "outside of" marriage. Language

perpetuates privilege and oppression especially by reinforcing stereotypes such as multi-problem families, deadbeat dads, and welfare mothers. These generalizations create distance and blame and decontexualize people from their socio-political situatins minimizing empathy and responsibility. The strategic use of language is evasive and purposefully vague to disguise power and "preserve the illusions of innocence."

Effective Interventions

Social class was brought up in the programs but there was disagreement especially by students about the frequency and context of discussions, e.g., if social class was just another oppression on "the list." Most agreed that social class issues were brought up in supervision and therapy especially if the client was presumed to be from a lower social class. Students complained that their own social class issues, especially about experiences of oppression were ignored. This probably was due to a discourse about the presumed social class of graduate students and professionals, especially those that were white. It may also reflect the difficulty, lack of clarity and fear about addressing social class issues and the risk of exposing power/privilege among the faculty.

In spite of this, faculty expressed a desire for diverse faculty and student bodies, committed faculty to raise awareness and have discussions about justice issues such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality. They want students to use their professional identity vis a vis under-privilege, to have the responsibility to take a stand and challenge oppression looking at the impact of the larger systems including policy issues and how they inform practice,

Each of the programs made different efforts to create opportunities for student therapists to have experiences of working with clients across class boundaries. This translated to providing cross-class experiences with poor/working-class clients. This

committed effort did not realize or acknowledge that for some therapists, working in a cross-class context would pair working-class therapists with middle and upper class clients. Therapists and supervisors can benefit from learning to bridge social class differences in therapy, including those who have more wealth and privilege. Many participants acknowledged their discomfort doing cross-class therapy that often challenged their own class values.

Programs provided therapy with poor/working-class clients out of solidarity with these groups, creating increased access in a variety of ways including sliding scale clinics, in-home therapy, and community sites. Students recognized the need for increased access and more welcoming atmospheres for the poorest clients who had more limited time, monies, language/literacy barriers, or geographical access to resources and needed to prioritize survival over the luxury of therapy. Participants highlighted important learnings about the non-monied resources, incredible strengths, and resistance to impositions of system intrusion and control that many of these clients had, providing differing perspectives for those from more privileged backgrounds.

Open-hearted dialogue with disparaged cultures can bridge people's experiences and teach more about social rules, power, oppression, and resistance. Those who have more power and privilege have the responsibility of being trustworthy and creating a safe atmosphere where these issues might be discussed in both therapy and supervision. Effective supervision can encourage self-reflection by both supervisors and therapist to broaden these experiences.including challenging privilege, naming internalized class pain, and recognizing the ways we have benefited from classist stereotypes and exploitation. In effective supervision self of the therapist issues are explored, social class-

based assumptions are challenged, power and privileged is exposed, and classist language and other practices are brought to awareness. When exploring class of origin issues, supervisors and therapist must expand the classical, unitary view of self to include multiple aspects of identity, social location and privilege.

Supervision can provide a safe atmosphere to explore fears of offending because of ignorance, fears of being pulled into a cycle of hopelessness, helplessness, and despair as well as providing an opportunity for students, and supervisors as appropriate, to share their own experiences of class struggle and discrimination.

Social responsibility is to be in solidarity, highlight oppression and challenge privilege; to take action about these issues, not just give these issues "lip service." Action sometimes pushes out contemplation in a competitive environment. A feeling of powerlessness within the profession may lead to an isomorphic position of helplessness to share power with those less empowered.

Family therapy can continue to lead from the margins and confront the status quo rather than unreflectively mirror dominant social values. Fighting for recognition in the centrist mainstream may be in conflict with being visionary and in solidarity with subalteran, marginalized voices as this may transgress the social rules that we are expected to observe in order to be recognized by those with the most status and power. This standpoint of social responsibility and solidarity may also have financial consequences for the programs and the profession. Programs at the bottom of the hierarchy may have more freedom to be different and radical if the program/school institution embraces their marginality. If not, the institution will attempt to silence and make invisible any dissention or challenge to the status quo.

With the replication of class ranking and hierarchy, the socialization to become a professional and follow the social rules, the fear of consequences and punishment for resisting, and the resistance in spite of these dangers lessening the program's status, power and privilege, it is easy to become distracted and fall back into replication of some of the social myths through language, classism, and myopia. The focus on being professionals and activists rather than just academics may prioritize action over reflection and invite us to skip reflexive contemplation about our goals and the process by which we strive to achieve those goals. Especially under circumstances of survival, there is little luxury of time and space for reflection. Yet, just as reflection on self of the therapist issues becomes important to the goal of a strong therapeutic relationship and effective therapy (see also personal reflections on social class in Chapter 5), so do professionals and their programs need time to reflect on class issues and the process of working on action goals. The need for circular, systemic reflexivity personally, professionally, and programmatically to challenge the social discourse becomes paramount for socially committed professionals and programs. This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

WEAVING SOCIAL CLASS INTO FAMILY THERAPY EDUCATION

Expanding Our Social Class Lens

Social Class Awareness

Social class is more visible and alluded to than I initially realized when I began this research journey. Social class is discussed indirectly, using code words: class markers or phrases indicating one's relative position within society or the relational context of the speakers. Conversations are brief and tangential. Rarely do two people from different social classes, sustain a discussion about social class. Most participants said that social class did not "come up" enough in life or in family therapy programs. We see class everywhere and take it for granted. It is the way life "should be" with little critique.

Language

There is more awareness of social class than I first recognized. Class awareness is alluded to through coded, e.g., *quality* education or *good* neighborhoods, and loaded, value and social worth defining, e.g., *classy or low class*, language. Through class-linked markers such as food, cars, houses, neighborhoods, grocery stores, occupations, styles of churches, types of religion, use of toilet paper, social class is continually discussed in coded words. We talk about the kinds or lack of benefits, vacations, time, education, values and our health. We talk about expectations and more expectations: our parents', our partner's, our siblings', our supervisor's, the profession's and society's. We talk about how these expectations influence our self-worth. Although culturally specific, these expectations reflect on whether we are successes or failures, whether we have "made it

good" or if there is shame or ambivalence because we have done better than other family members. These markers are coded according to class and loaded with ranking and value judgements of who is worthy and who is not.

Myths

Social class myths support a status value system that teaches that up is good and down is made, not only for the pocketbook, but in ranked concepts that pressure people to internalize them. Such myths as "we are all middle class" or "welfare reform is necessary to prevent welfare queens from stealing from us all" sustain the belief that in the United States, social mobility is possible depending on meritocratic individualism, e.g., "we can all get rich if we work hard enough." Social class myths divert attention away from the elite rich who do steal from us all with corporate wealthfare protection via income and inheritance taxes, trade agreements, etc.

Many research participants evoked social class myths regarding the American dream, the land of opportunity for all those willing to work hard. The rugged individual, who pulls "himself" up by his own bootstraps, is assumed to be male, at least middle-class and white…or made in that image. This individual focus creates the perception that one is freed from class, gender, race and other social constructs, which dislocates the person and "his" life chances from their material contexts (Zweig, p. 96).

Privilege

The "higher" the class or status, the more entitlement to privileges. One privilege associated with "higher classes" is increased access to material and other resources. Privilege is invisible and taken for granted by those who feel entitled to it *until it is threatened*. These privileges are visible to those denied them. When this entitlement is challenged, the privileged can respond in several ways. They can share their privilege,

ignore the challenge, pathologize those who threaten, forcibly deny the privilege, do nothing and feel nothing or guilt. Guilt reactions continue to effectively block and deny privilege to those without this entitlement.

Several participants spoke of their embarrassment of suddenly realizing how blind they had been, tucked into the glassed walls of and oblivious to their privilege and to the suffering outside. Another talked about the sense of "going backwards" learning to see life from a different perspective, almost as if a child. Others readily saw their privilege in relationship to their families or how they grew up. One participant spoke of her privilege in terms of housing. The house she owned did not seem that large to her, but she caught herself laughing when she realized just how big, how "rich," it would have seemed to her as child. Many remarked about the privilege of their education.

These issues are often invisible to us. There are wonderfully rare people who are sensitive and humble enough to recognize and name their privilege–who have a sense of wonder and the gifts that are around them. Often, those who are "below" or on the "underside" of the "ladder" are aware. Whether they bring that information forth depends on several issues. It depends on how they were brought up and whether they were taught to name and speak about social class. It depends on who is around. People may share what is "on their minds" either when they perceive they have more privilege than others do in their company or they perceive that they have the same amount of privilege. There are even rarer individuals who have the courage to name and make visible those differences they perceive between themselves and others. Speaking and naming the social class issue comes with risks and consequences. In other instances, the taboo has been internalized. The issues of social class are not even in the "back of the

mind." Or if they are, they are pushed away as too painful. Participants spoke of not wanting to "go there" and not being willing to disturb the "layers" of feelings, memories, and thoughts that lie buried.

Discrimination

Social class discrimination is socially accepted and causes immense pain and suffering. Those who are most oppressed by classism are blamed and held responsible for this suffering which is seen as a result of either a moral, i.e., too lazy or character, i.e., too weak, deficit. Social class identity determines one's social worth. A recent example of this was the compensation checks given out as a result of the September 11th tragedies in denominations according to the perceived social worth of the victims. While this justification was publicly acknowledged, no outcry was reported. Those who are discriminated against are expected to be silent about the injustice of classism to protect the interests and rationale of those who are privileged. Fear of the loss of privilege silences the voices of those with more power.

Many participants had difficulty sharing their experiences of classism or "going there" as one student put it. Memories laced with shame, anger, and hurt are poignant for people to recall especially those with class backgrounds that deviate from the middle class "norm." The few who had acquired "upper-class" status through social mobility, struggle with feelings of inadequacy, as they remember "not being good enough."

Open and frank social class conversations are avoided in inter-class contexts, according to research participants. The myth of class mobility creates an uncomfortable caution that the person with whom we're speaking may not be the assumed social class. Those with more economic privilege and social status risk the anger and judgment of those unjustly deprived; those with less privilege and status risk being blamed for their

own misfortune. Social class mythology encourages those oppressed by classism to internalize this self-blame. Those who angrily resist are attacked and ostracized. Those who complain are shamed for "whining" and pathologized for their vulnerability.

The anger and internalized shame of those discriminated against and the occasional guilt of the privileged becomes overwhelming to both. It is up to those who suffer to protect those who have imposed or colluded with suffering. Fear of being punished for opening up and giving voice to the deepest-felt emotions is reinforced by punishment: attacking by either anger or shaming. This is the discipline of imposed silence.

Those who have experienced a more privileged lifestyle often find it difficult to express the pain they feel when they and especially their children now experience less privilege. Parents who cannot give as their own parents have given them often feel a painful combination of suffering, anger at themselves, perhaps anger at society, fear of what the consequences for their own children may be, guilt, and shame.

Dominant discourse

We are aware of the dominant social class discourse as evidenced by our reluctance to trespass against the social rule of broaching social class conversation, especially in cross-class conversations. Those who challenge this taboo are punished, especially if they are part of the subaltern group or non-dominant group (e.g. the "poor" or students).

Recognizing their comments at times countered the prevailing social class discourse, participants hesitated and punctuated these remarks by using phrases that I am calling counter-discourse indicators. These counter-discourse indicators such as "you know," "I mean" and "uhm" and possibly "sort of" used before their statements, indicated an awareness of breaching a social taboo: first, by talking about social class and second, by having an opinion contrary to the dominant discourse. "Radical listening" (Weingarten,

1995) was necessary to clarify my confusion. After carefully studying the context, subtle nuances and listening in-between the lines, what participants *seemed* to be saying might be different from what they meant. Contradictions reflected in U.S. mythology throughout the dominant class discourse were prevalent.

We collude with the dominant social class discourse when we enforce a "professional," i.e., rational and business-like atmosphere in our programs. Emotions, the spirit and the body are ignored as the disembodied mind becomes privileged. The reserved, distant, all knowing expert calmly imposes discipline and order, resulting in a lack of intentional conversations about social class and a vulnerable, unsafe atmosphere.

Hierarchy of oppression

Many people suffer the effects of discrimination in multiple social contexts (sexual orientation, spirituality, race, age, gender, ability, nationality, class). While individual experiences may vary, it is unhelpful to impose a class or ranking of oppressions which, Cherrie Moraga (1983) reminded us, is used as a divide and conquer tactic. We need to be mindful that class can be pitted against race, which can be pitted against gender, and other domains of identity and oppression.

There are many that suffer from multiple oppressions: double and triple jeopardy as a result, e.g., of race and gender and class discrimination. It is important to acknowledge the effects of multiple oppression on persons or groups. There is an assumption that those who have experienced oppression in other contexts would be more likely to see through class myths and recognize classism. This is not necessarily true. Hearing stories of class oppression, one may recognize a similar struggle with their own experiences of domination and discrimination or one may collude with this different oppression.

Social Class Identity

Social class identity is relational, multi-faceted and contextual. This interacts with the significant people, e.g., mother, father, siblings, etc., and other identities in our lives such as race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, religion, spirituality, age and ability. Our experience of social class is modulated through these lenses and determines our rank or social position in society. Social class position or location as determined by the dominant social class discourse may be distinct from that which is claimed as one's social class identity.

Money and status

Social class has been described as both being about money and being more than just money. Money defines who has access to resources. The term socio-economic class as it is commonly used focused on the "money" aspect of social class and obscures the beliefs, assumptions, values, and strengths associated with social class. Class gives a certain status or social worth in society. One can be given or acquire status attributes without being recognized as having changed social class such as a baseball or rap star who is still considered "low class." Many described social class spatially, such as moving "up" or "down" the social class ladder or they talked about being on one end of the social class spectrum or the other. "Higher", "lower", and degrees in between were used to describe social class positions or locations.

Nested or embedded class

Most people report bringing their former sense of identity along even if they now have either the identity and/or trappings of another class. Thus, social class is "carried" forward into at least the next generation. Children learn the meaning of class, assumptions, values and sense of worth from their own parents' struggles. As Shani

D'Cruze (1997, p.75) exclaimed, "And it remained to haunt us, because it never ceased to haunt my father." People even one generation removed from these life experiences, speak of being loyal to the family legacy of struggle and the values of hard work, sacrifice, and other unnamed values. Being from a "blue-collar" family was an identity several participants were proud about.

Other participants told stories of forebearers who were middle or upper class and the impact of class on their lives. One told of grandparents who chose to follow paths of justice that conflicted with their own class interests and the legacy that choice left to their grandchildren. Several participants told of the pain they experienced related to their career choices because they could not provide the financial security for their children that had been provided for them. Some people preferred to create distance between themselves and their families' more privileged class experiences.

Class mobility was reported primarily to the next social class rather than skipping a social class, for example "lower" class to middle class rather than to upper class. Many participants described the influence of their class of origin on their present life. Participants described buying things on sale, not wasting resources, buying used items and saving items that could be useful later.

Passing

Some felt caught in the middle between class identities. "Seeing in two directions, awkwardly" as one academic titled an essay (LaPaglia, 1995). Participants who had moved "up" the social class ladder as a result of their education described the feeling of "passing," being an imposter and never quite feeling that they made "it" in spite of degrees, money, and other class markers. Several reported not feeling comfortable with middle or upper class people, partly because of the fear that they would be recognized as

an "imposter." Others expressed the fear of "falling again." Several shared their sense of loss of their working-class identity. Others, like myself, continued to identify themselves as working-class in spite of advanced degrees and/or "professional" careers. Others clearly saw themselves as more privileged than their former lives or family but, nonetheless, sees a strong sense of connection, awareness and obligation to that former social identity. Most participants expressed their awareness of their education as a privilege and the responsibility that it meant for their families and childhood communities, especially given the lack of opportunities for those from a "poor" or working-class background.

Interacting social identities

Socio-cultural issues modulate social class. Many racial, ethnic, regional, spiritual and international groups' differences were reported in how class is viewed and experienced within different cultural groups. For example, several African-American participants shared a similar view that dominant social class indicators are de-emphasized in each of their various local communities. Status was accorded by community involvement, leadership within various local communities (churches, schools, clubs, etc), degrees, skin color, family connections, etc. Other participants shared their own class perspectives of remembering the impact of class standing on their struggle to survive, including their own awareness of their "lower" class standing in their own black communities. While the class language was different than that used in white, middle-class society, the experience had some similarities. Several groups discussed education as a marker of more privileged class experience.

Health, aging, and ability are other class moderators mentioned in the study. Money and other markers of social class position, for example, can increase access to quality

health care. It does not, however, guarantee health or ensure social status. The interaction of sexual orientation and social class is mentioned in the literature as well, especially in *Out of the Class Closet, Lesbians Speak* (Penelope, 1994b).

People reported that their perceptions of their social class might differ from others' perceptions. Those with less social class privilege may "in the back of their minds" label the social class of those with more privilege but rarely said that aloud, especially to the person with more privilege.

Professionalization

One of the exciting conversations that came up was the process of professional socialization that occurs in becoming a therapist and the implications this had for class identity. Participants wondered about the expectations of supervisors, teachers, and other leaders in the field of family therapy, including the assumption that emerging professionals will take on at least a middle-class identity and leave behind their "class of origin." Many students from poor/working-class backgrounds struggled with issues of class loyalty and the poignantly painful expectation that being a "good" therapist meant becoming a member of a class that often made disparaging remarks about working-class and poor families, especially through popular culture. One participant pointed out the Beverly Hillbillies as an example of societal images of the honest but "dumb" working-class made good exploited by the greedy rich while the calm, helpful and efficient middle class tried to make everything "better."

Assumptions

A painful issue for several people was the assumption on the part of supervisors and colleagues that because they were educated, they did not have personal experiences of class or other discrimination. This seemed especially true with students who were white

or assumed to be white. One student gave an example of a supervisor who made this assumption about her lack of personal experience of discrimination in discussing a particular case and the therapist felt too vulnerable to protest, closing down the supervision process. Many had never talked about nor had they been invited to share these types of experiences before. One student actively challenged these assumptions. Another described middle class accoutrements of education or even dress as "masking" authentic class identity. A supervisor-in-training talked about the assumption of "professional" dress being middle or even upper-middle class clothing even when the client was not middle-class.

A student who identified herself as growing up "in poverty" discussed the assumption that everyone is supposed to want more, to leave behind the lower status, and to seek a "better life." The "disadvantaged" should leave behind the "inferior" homes, deteriorating neighborhoods, the imagined dysfunctional families, and the so-called damaged psyches. It is a disservice to romanticize the oppression of poverty, the experience of closed access to essential services and the increase struggle to merely live. Those who have lived "without" would be dangerous if they felt the rage of injustice rather than the shame of self-blame. Therapists from the working-class are expected to collude with this practice, leave behind families, communities and identities and make themselves anew in the images and values of the professional class. Professionals must strive to succeed and want more, a better life.

External evaluation and standards measure achievement and success. To be part of the professional class, we must work harder and not be satisfied. We can't be content with our work, with how we are living, where and in what kind of house, what kind of car we

are driving and the clothes we are wearing. Our economy thrives on this buying frenzy to fill that empty hole within our spirits. We are afraid of what will happen if we don't buy, if we resisted that acquisitive edge and expectations to conform to those images of success, beauty, and status. We are expected to conform to the image of the professional.

Students' financial struggles

Students felt faculty was unaware of, did not acknowledge, or minimized their financial struggles, for example, when faculty wondered why students did not take advantage of AAMFT conferences. Students, overwhelmed by daily economic worries or concerned about their financial futures under "mounds of debt," felt their financial situations were invisible to their faculty.

Students felt, however, that when made aware, most faculty members were sympathetic. One student commented the faculty assumed that everything was fine. If enough students identified an issue and brought it to their attention, faculty rallied in support of the students. Students reported faculty seemed at a loss for ideas to remedy situations and rarely did they take any initiative to use their own positions to work towards solutions. One student shared how a faculty member worked with this student to address class fears about internship interviews.

Clinical experiences and courses

Faculty described the intentional use of in-home therapy to sensitize therapists to different class realities. Both faculty and students observed that in-home therapy helped contexualize many students' own experiences of being "poor" while reminding others of their own backgrounds and financial struggles. One faculty participant pointed out the need to do "containment" of depression/hopelessness as students encountered realities

differing from their own class experiences. No differentiation was made between these reactions and those of students from similar class backgrounds.

Students commented on the lack of access to some in-home or off-site programs by those with limited resources, such as transportation. Students in programs that did not offer "in-home" training as part of their regular program remarked on its absence. Others expressed their gratitude to faculty who either supported their placement in community sites/agencies or who used their own connections to make viable individual placement options. Students expressed concerns about accessibility of their clinics to clients with limited resources while acknowledging their pride in their sliding scale services. Several students told of their efforts supported by faculty to address some of these concerns.

Most faculty participants reported that social class was discussed both in courses and supervision. Some students felt that social class was another oppression "on the list" mentioned but not really talked about. No program reported any course specifically focused on social class. One program had a unit of study focused on social class with a paper assignment to do a personal social class genogram. Many faculty and students expressed a need to focus more on social class in courses, supervision, and therapy, especially challenging class assumptions and discrimination.

Identity and social class hierarchy

Students reported their observations about family therapy's struggle for identity in the "social class" hierarchy. Students were concerned about the lack of status of family therapists in the mental health field as evidenced by the lack of paid internships, the lack of cooperation among programs or the lack of a national "placement" day to find appropriate internship sites such as psychology students have. Students felt family therapy's "limited pie ideology" caused the professional leadership to focus their concern

on family therapy's place on the professional rung rather than looking out for and enabling students to participate more actively in professional associations and have positive clinical experiences. Examples given included attending national conferences, presenting at workshops and posters sessions, and publishing. Yet there were very little monies allocated in programs to support students' efforts in these arenas. Monies that were allocated were inadequate for those students without independent financial means. Thus, the social hierarchy was maintained in the training programs. Those who had the financial resources would rise more quickly to leadership positions within the profession because of their financial ability to participate in these activities.

Social Class in Supervision and Therapy

Faculty and students have an opportunity to be collaborative and in coalition with those who suffer from classism and other oppression. To collaborate is to be open to the "Other," ready to learn as well as to share our own knowledge and expertise. To collaborate is to believe that as professionals we will come away from the experience with knowledge that can help us to be better people as well as being able to share our knowledge to make someone else's life better. It means taking responsibility to share our power even when there is a risk to do so. If the risk is too great or unreasonable as it sometimes is, we have a responsibility to refer to someone more appropriate.

By making social class explicit as professionals, we face an economic risk. When we take social class seriously, we know there are those who are unable to afford therapy services that are available to many members of our society. What is our response to this? If we do nothing when we have the opportunity to share our professional talents at a reduced or sliding scale prices, we are choosing not to let the issue of social class come into the therapy room. We all deserve to make a decent living. To turn our backs on *all*

opportunities to work with those who are economically oppressed is, from my perspective, an ethical violation. Many of us that have been trained in community agencies have learned our skills while working with working-class and poor clients. We have an obligation to those who have benefited from our training. The reality, however, will hit our pocketbooks the more responsive that we are. There are consequences for being in coalition with groups that are targeted and/or marginalized in our society.

Cross-class relationships

Faculty talked about their ethical responsibility to expose students to clients different from themselves in general, and poor/working-class clients in particular. Several cited their own social class experiences and struggles as being motivators for their commitment to their profession and training the next generation of therapists.

In therapy, supervision, academia, and life, cross-class relationships can be challenging, rewarding and life-enhancing. Those with more power have a responsibility to take more initiative to become aware of and support the struggle against class discrimination, including following the leadership of those who are most oppressed by classism. Because there is distrust in cross-class conversations, cross-class supervision and therapy may be "problematic" and may need self of the therapist/supervisor work to surface and explore class assumptions. Social class is often considered part of the race, class, gender litany and receives the least attention in academic courses and supervision.

Assumptions

Social class assumptions are prevalent in both family therapy education and therapy. A primary assumption is that social class means the "poor" and that those poor are primarily inner-city women of color. Another assumption is those who get graduate degrees, become middle class. Many assumptions target those with less privilege.

Supervisors have a responsibility to be self-reflexive and to help therapists to reflect on their own class issues and to "untangle their relationships to both forces of being oppressor and oppressed" (Roffman, 1996, p.171). Clients and therapists both may internalize stereotypes and fail to challenge assumptions about their own as well as another's social class (Russell, 1996). Class bias needs deconstructing "from a positive perspective that respects and supports the experience and knowledge of people who do not fit the dominant cultural bias" (Leeder, 1996, p.168).

Raising questions about social class experiences are opportunities to unearth the stories and meanings from a different perspective, to challenge our assumptions and refrain from imposing meaning. Why did siblings in one part of the family separated by divorce go to college while the siblings in the other part of the family did not? What were the differences? What were the differences in your mother's and father's financial, time, and other resources? What did each believe about people who went to college?

Learning from the oppressed

If there is an assumption that we are the same dominant social class, we assume we don't need to talk about it, just as whites don't need to talk about race, men, about gender, or straights about sexual orientation. Assumption leads to blindness and presumed similarity or differences where they do not exist. We may not take the opportunity to learn from those less privileged first because we assume that *we* are more educated and knowledgeable. Second, we may not want to hear what they are saying because we will feel uncomfortable. We will be challenged to look at our privilege. Better to ignore the differences even if this brings more pain for those who are already suffering.

Dominant class myths and perspectives, reinforced by media images, are incorporated uncritically into our consciousness. These bolster myths of the "traditional family"

(Collins, 1998) or "normal" person. "White, middle class" becomes the norm, resulting in distorted perceptions about economically disadvantaged, especially, families of color. As educators, we have "functioned not only to confirm and privilege [those] from the dominant classes, [education] has also functioned through exclusion and insult to disconfirm the histories, experiences and dreams of subordinate groups" (Giroux, 1995, p.192). "Therapy with the dispossessed, either economically or emotionally, is most likely to elicit such colonialist attitudes" (Montijo, 1990, p.17).

Marginalizing experiences profoundly impact mental health in the U.S. The poor are blamed and demonized, the working-class, ignored, the middle class stereotyped and discontented, the wealthy, idealized. Bringing class to the foreground is an essential educational endeavor. Missed opportunities result in a diminished ability to empower clients. With the preponderance of myths assaulting our consciousness, it would be easy for us to assume that with hard work and goodness that our clients will inevitably be successful in their efforts to overcome their struggles and find happiness. Conversely, this assumption would allow us to believe if they fail to be successful, they only have themselves to blame.

These attitudes are not only incorporated by those less privileged by class, race and gender. While there is always some degree of internalized classism, racism and sexism, there may indeed be more dents or holes in these myths or stronger armor against them than for those whose lives seem to be rewarded for their own and their significant other's efforts. Issues of social class can be extremely pertinent for those who experience a disillusioning "fall from grace" (Newman, 1988). As therapists and supervisors, our own sense of identify and success is powerfully influenced by American cultural beliefs,

especially the more socially privileged we are by class, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, appearance, ability, etc.

Sitting with clients raised in middle class homes who now find themselves desperate as they face the abyss of financial ruin with cloying shame and despair, the underbelly of privilege surfaces. By embracing entitlement, we each participate in weaving the webs of ideology that ensnare us. Even with the most internalized classism, however, there are cracks in the ideology that hide fierce spirits of resistance.

Resisting the invitation

As family therapists sit with their clients, these ideas illustrate how powerful is the social construction of class. We are invited to reduce class complexity to binary opposites, valuing the middle class as the primary referent for all classes, pathologizing all behavior of the "Other" that does not fit this template and denying the multiplicity of our clients' social class, as well as our own. Therapy is an inadequate challenge to the powerful social forces that assail the poor and working-class, eliciting feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness from all involved. If we do not name and acknowledge these struggles within our training programs, and ourselves can we provide an encouraging atmosphere to explore these conversations in therapy? How we treat our students with certainly model behavior that will be replicated in therapy sessions.

As faculty we may not have control over how our program or profession is treated within their embedded social class hierarchies. By making visible and naming this class oppression, however, we provide important models of active resistance to our students rather than passing on this internalized classism by ignoring class discrimination or projecting our pain. This creates a dilemma as "professional" behavior socializes us into silence about social class distinctions, privileges, and oppression.

Privileged resistance

> White women flock to our parties, dance to the beat of our radical colored
> chic. .... What I mind is the pseudo-liberal ones who suffer from the
> white women's burden. Like a monkey in the Sufi story, who upon seeing
> a fish in the water rushes to rescue it from drowning by carrying it up into
> the branches of a tree. She takes a missionary role. She attempts to talk
> for us- what a presumption! This is an act of rape of our tongue and our
> acquiescence is complicity to that rape. We women of color have to stop
> being modern medusas- throats cut, silenced into mere hissing.
> (Anzaldua, 1983, p. 206)

For those of us who are more privileged by class, race, gender or other identities,

another danger as educators and therapists is to resist the invitation to "adopt" those less

privileged. Whether clients or student therapists, they become "our cause" while

expecting them "to adapt" to our expectations and our language. Gloria Anzaldua

(Anzaldua, 1983) reminded women of color that those "who have strung degrees,

credentials and published books around our necks like pearls that we hang onto for dear

life are in danger of contributing to the invisibility of our sister-writers" (p.167). For

those who have suffered oppression, there is the danger of colluding with the

pathologizing and disempowerment of clients with non-dominant identities. We may

turn our backs on these clients rather than jeopardizing our hard fought for status as

educators and professionals, attempting to create distance between "us" and "them."

Those who have experienced class discrimination do not need to be rejected, rescued, or

pitied. We need to work together to respect one another's strengths and actively join the

struggle to resist the classism that effects us all.

How do socially responsible family therapy programs train therapists to resist the

dominant discourse of classism? What are we doing effectively? What do we need to

change?

Building on Our Strengths

Strong Foundations

The four programs in this study all had strong foundations in social class. Led by many of their directors, these programs were intentionally attracting dedicated faculty committed to the formation of family therapists with a sense of social responsibility. They had created sliding scale clinics, were piloting innovative outreach programs, and many provided in-home therapy or worked in collaboration with other agencies committed to serving those oppressed by social structures. They reframed the "poor" in positions of strength and resources and exposed students with privilege to those who struggle with oppression. Therapy models were respectful and collaborative. Many faculty and the students that they attracted used their own backgrounds and the experiences of their clients to challenge their own classism. Participants acknowledged important lessons they had learned from their clients, as faculty and students acknowledged learning from each other as well.

Faculty in general helped students to be more aware of issues of gender, race, and class as it pertains to "poor people." Some faculty also challenged the assumption that social class was only an issue for the "poor" or people of color. Programs were providing some financial assistance (scholarships, teaching assistantships and graduate assistantships) for students to study, do therapy, get supervision, and provide outreach. The faculties were providing a vision of change, respect, collaboration and social responsibility. The programs encouraged and generally recognized and supported initiative, especially when it came from students who had status or rank within the programs, students who "earned" it.

Many of the faculty also worked hard in and through professional organizations to challenge the "powers that be" and support a new vision on local, state, regional and national levels. Most researched, wrote, published and spoke about issues of oppression, privilege and social constructs

These programs attracted a group of dedicated faculties who were committed to issues of justice. They were scholars, practitioners, and activists who expressed and were portrayed as willing to learn from their students and share their own learning. Faculty struggled to balance clinical practice with clients, teaching and supervision as well as their activism and continued learning. Both the faculty and the programs attracted students who shared this vision and commitment to justice. This has spawned a whole generation of therapists who are only beginning to make their own marks in the field, birthing a new movement and vision.

Faculty and students worked together to create atmospheres of respect, awareness, collaboration and justice. Faculty helped students to look at issues of context, exploring self of the therapist and family of origin issues and how these impact the therapeutic system and clients. Many students acknowledged their privilege and expressed awareness of oppression from perspectives of class, race, and/or gender and especially in terms of education. Many students were very observant and articulate about isomorphic ranking practices within the mental health field, the profession, and the structures that supported the program. Others talked about issues of power.

The programs promoted scholarship by supporting critical thinking, questioning and speaking out about injustice as well as an openness to new ideas, including when student-initiated. Led by dedicated faculty and committed students, these programs were

intentional, innovative, responsible and collaborative. They provided education, training, support, modeling, and leadership while creating a vision of socially contextual and responsible practice.

Recommendations for Practice

Setting the tone

Family therapy educators and their students are already providing models of responsible social leadership and mentoring: as scholars, practitioners, and activists. While all the programs recognize the importance of social class, participants acknowledged the need to focus more attention in this area.

Social class issues need to be assessed just as gender, race, sexual orientation, and other lenses are currently being explored for meaningful connections to the presenting concerns of students or clients. Being aware of the influence of class helps sort out issues, significant data, or even directions that seemed to be missing. Julia Penelope (1994a) in "Class and Consciousness" explained:

> Class, and our knowledge of how it functions in our lives, are ingrained in the cells of our bodies and our brains, so deeply intuitive that we are unable to identify experiences as class experiences until we consciously begin to look for them. Usually, some incident compels us to undertake the process of discovery. (p.41)

Self-reflexivity. How can we bring to the foreground these conversations about social class as we educate family therapists in graduate and post-graduate training programs? Roffman (1996) suggested we begin with taking the time and opportunity to "untangle [our] relationships to both forces of being oppressor and oppressed" (p.171). We need to see class "from a positive perspective that respects and supports the experience and knowledge of people who do not fit the dominant cultural bias" (p.168).

Internalized oppression. Glenda Russell (1996) reminded us that classism can be internalized just as other forms of oppression. Supervisors, therapists and clients all may internalize stereotypes about their own as well as other's class. Adapting Giroux's (1995, p.192) idea about education, we have "functioned not only to confirm and privilege [those] from the dominant classes, it has also functioned through exclusion and insult to disconfirm the histories, experiences and dreams of subordinate groups." Because of limited academic attention to class issues, we have not developed the theoretical framework to deconstruct therapeutic issues related to social class. This is further complicated by the complexity of social class that is reduced to economic terms and social class identity that is subsumed under the classical sense of a unitary self.

Dealing with the pain of classism. As educators and therapists, we cannot expect our students and clients to pursue this journey of discovery if we ourselves have not reflected on the influence of social class in our own lives. Supervisors/therapists must take responsibility to work through our own class issues and pain, to create the space to radically listen and focus on the issues of the students or clients. We need to work through experiences of our own guilt, anger, fear, shame and helplessness. We can acknowledge the realities that we do not have enough power or we have failed to use the power we have to confront class discrimination. If as faculty we are too overwhelmed by the immensity of feelings involved, we have a responsibility to take the same steps that we would direct students to take: seek consultation and if necessary refer to another supervisor or therapist. Our students/clients don't need our frustration, guilt or other feelings. They do need to know that we are human and we experience these things. Student therapists may also need to be encouraged or more rarely, required, to seek

outside counseling to process their own class discrimination or internalized class oppression, especially if it interferes with the goals and needs of clients. By accessing the experience of our own struggles with class privilege and discrimination, we can empathize with the pains while pointing out the exceptions that provide the foundations of resistance and power to confront the classism that we are invited to internalize as both oppressed and oppressors.

Resisting stereotypes. Supervisors/therapists have a responsibility to become reflective about our own class issues and broaden our awareness of class experiences beyond our own. We need to be aware of the danger of essentializing any group in society, especially those who are already stereotypically known. Supervisors/therapists have a responsibility to contest class stereotypes, challenge class oppression and highlight or offer contrasting, positive images (West, 1995) which deconstruct class bias. When we have "untangled" these issues and experiences within ourselves, we will have the space to reflect on and confront the dominant class discourse and see class bias more clearly (Leeder, 1996). Therapy educators, e.g., have often adopted middle class values such as upward mobility and assumed their universal value and application to students and clients alike.

Program reflexivity. Bringing conversations about social class to the foreground in family therapy programs is important. Programs as well as individuals need opportunities to reflect on their goals, process, and outcome relating to social class. In order to incorporate class into the program and resist social class discrimination, programs need to take time to have conversations to share and gather information from faculty, students, staff, clients, and others whose standpoints might be helpful.

Programs can encourage evaluation, feedback, and reflection on their own collective attitudes and actions in the same way that self-reflexivity in supervision and therapy is prioritized. This can be accomplished both formally and informally through conversations, focus groups, task forces, surveys, and suggestion boxes. These will fail if participants sense that only "lip service" is given to these as "symbolic" actions.

One of the dangers of having program reflexivity about social class issues is that participants would expect some change in attitudes and concrete action related to the issues being brought up. To recognize the importance of social class issues and identify class discrimination is not sufficient if efforts are not made to work towards eliminating class oppression. These will not happen overnight as classism like racism, sexism, heterosexism and other forms of discrimination are ingrained in our system. If awareness is raised and lip service is given to social class, but issues are never seriously addressed nor progress discerned, participants will eventually say, "Why bother?" They will refrain from disclosing more information or they will begin to give the feedback they think those in authority in the program want to hear. One concrete action that signifies the importance of this issue is incorporating social class diversity into the program. How is the diversity of faculty, the student body, as well as other program personnel reflecting social class? Is that social class diversity reflected in other aspects of diversity such as race, gender, sexual orientation, age and other constructs of identity and meaning?

Incommensurability. The manner in which these conversations are engaged is crucial. Program directors, faculty and therapists must be mindful to use their power responsibly, creating space and inviting faculty, students and clients to share their own class-linked stories and experiences within the program. Those in dominant positions

have a tendency to summarize conversations. This may risk reducing very complex, often parallel stories and themes to one general story/theme, subjugating the subaltern story to the faculty or therapist story. Learning to be comfortable with ambiguity is an important skill. As Schutte (1998) reminded us, the incommensurable parts of the conversation may be the most fruitful and meaningful parts.

Focus groups. Initially, to establish the importance of social class, focus groups may be necessary to make social class an important "focus" for the program. This student talked about the importance of these conversations even though the focus group "conjures up" different feelings for each participant.

> *I definitely heard a lot of things that, you know, will make me think differently, so I really appreciate everything that everyone said, I really enjoyed this a lot. 'Cause when I hear social class, it conjures up feelings in me, too, and you know they're very different than the feelings that it conjured in you because you had a very different experience. It has been very powerful and emotion-filled. Thank you everyone, I really enjoyed it!*

Eventually, if changes are made in attitude and class discrimination is reduced, social class issues can be incorporated into the general feedback about the program with this being one of many issues regularly explored. When an atmosphere is established that it is acceptable to talk about social class, then more people will be aware, recognize and feel comfortable to "bring the issue up" when it is most appropriate rather than privileging social class over another more pertinent issue.

When focus groups are initially conducted, it may be helpful to have separate groups for students, faculty, and other involved participants. For large student groups, it may be helpful to have separate first year groups. Students who have more experience in the program tend to have more authority to speak. An important issue is creating an atmosphere where people can feel safe to respectfully reveal their perspectives from the

limits of their own class experiences. What may be obvious to those who suffer class oppression is not as clear to those more privileged. An example raised in one of the focus groups was the assumption that all the students present were at least middle class. In reporting findings from the group, "outlier" or incommensurable ideas should not be eliminated or folded into approximate consensus.

If focus groups are part of an annual evaluation and feedback becomes an integral part of the program, student participants may become more comfortable giving feedback once they believe what they say will be received, heard and their own safety is not compromised. One way participants might be targeted is if either confidentiality is not honored or if assumptions are made about which participant shared the perspective and they become stereotyped. Another common student fear is the risk that their honesty may impact their grade or other form of evaluation, including how the faculty may perceive or stereotype the student. A task force of faculty and students may be necessary to set goals and access progress towards them as well as to monitor issues of safety and atmospheres of collaboration. Some of the feedback must be anonymous and confidential.

Reflecting Teams. Family therapists have an effective tool they could use and adapt to create dialogue among different groups with different social class perspectives. Reflecting teams (Biever & Gardner, 1995; Smith et al., 1995; Steier, 1999) have been used in therapy to create space for alternative voices as well as to hear a variety of perspectives without subjugating one group's story to another's. Similar to a "fish bowl" exercise, one group sits outside the circle or space and hears another's group's conversation without interruption. This can be accomplished apart, in the same room, through an observation window, video transmission, or videotape. The second group

then reflects upon what they heard from the first group, first sharing the messages that they heard and then commenting on them. The first group hears these messages and responds. With respectful, radical listening (Weingarten, 1995), a variety of viewpoints are heard and validated without necessarily agreeing with their content.

Conversations with those more privileged. Conversation about social class, whether in focus groups or any other manner, must be broadened to include the experiences of the middle class and upper class, some whose roots or class of origin may have changed. Those with less class privilege usually suffer more oppression, yet there are social class costs for the more privileged as well. Consumerism may be an effort to fill the emptiness of our capitalist-driven lives that value power, independence, security, privilege and using people over connection, simplicity and quality of life.

Those who come from more dominant classes or roles of power have more privilege to speak and greater authority when they do speak. Those of less power can say the same thing and be targeted, attacked, belittled, patronized, or ignored. To protect themselves from more oppression, the latter may unreflectively protect the more powerful and themselves by saying what the privileged prefer to hear, withholding their own perspectives and emotions that might threaten the dialogue. This can result in a privileging of the more vocal oppression of those who have more power over the experiences of those with less power. A hierarchy of suffering is unhelpful. There must be acknowledgment, however, of who has less access and resources, who is being more silenced, and who has less power. The challenge is to create space for people of more privileged class to claim their identity without colluding with their oppression of others.

Another challenge is to unearth stories of oppression, allow space for legitimate pain, without colluding with justification of oppression.

While habits of survival may create unnecessary vigilance, nonetheless, those who have been socialized to feel the shadow of domination recognize the subtle clues long before others see or feel them. When people react with internalized classism, usually, although not always, its because the messages of class oppression or discrimination are present and being conveyed.

More specific focus groups to explore other perspectives on social class could be developed. For example groups could explore social class and race, social class and sex/gender, social class and sexual orientation as well as other domains of influence. Another example is a focus group to dialogue around class-based assumptions such as the issue of professional dress. It would be important to distinguish between conversations for reflection and growth and conversations for recommendations and change. Being clear about whom has the power to make those decisions is a way of being honest about social class. Faculty, students, or clients can not be expected to equally share responsibilities about an issue if they do not equally share the power.

Faculty support. Faculty need opportunities for support dealing with the effects of oppression within the system. Those with more power and authority may need to be absent or be part of a reflecting team. Faculty members who choose not to participate should be respected. Those who have been oppressed have a greater sensitivity to the presence and possibility of oppression. Controls need to be put into place to keep people as safe as possible. What is being done with the information should be clearly stated.

Support for student organizing. An important support for poor/working-class students who are in the minority in programs is to have opportunities for separate student support groups and/or organizations. Many working-class students struggle with additional burdens of working outside jobs in addition to course and clinical work. The most challenging aspect may be to find common times to meet. However, with the requirement of many programs to have access to email, this can be used as an organizing and communication tool.

Supports such as used textbook exchange, job, and housing lists and lower cost health care information would be helpful. Other supports include scholarships for part-time students, need-based scholarships, child care information, volunteer opportunities at conferences, the possibility of social get-togethers for people on more limited budgets, recommendations or representation at faculty meetings. Acknowledgement that these are critical issues is in itself an important boost. Many of these services may be helpful to all students. These may provide the difference between being able to complete the program and dropping out for poor/working-class students.

Support for other student organizing around social class issues is important. Students mentioned outreach to more financially disadvantaged groups, more accessible community placements, need for more financial assistance to students for conferences, transportation, and internships as well as teaching and graduate assistant positions. Student-led task forces as well as faculty-student coalitions to suggest ways to address these issues may be helpful. These groups may need to access other institutional or professional structures to petition for permission or procure funding to implement action.

Curriculum. Curriculum committees or task forces might examine how social class is woven into every course. Are there separate courses as well as units and readings about social class in the curriculum? How does this material challenge social class assumptions? What do these class theories posit about the exclusive focus on people of color and the "poor?" How is oppression recognized without overlooking resistance? How is social position and status ranking examined without neglecting social class identity? How are more the voices of the more marginalized social classes heard? How are "popular" stories, theory, and information incorporated into the curriculum or are the theories studied only written by Ph.D.'s? Do we honor and value these other experiences and theories or are they considered to be "less worthy?"

Are speakers invited to share their class-based experiences including those students, administrative staff, maintenance workers, the security staff, and the food workers who are part of or support the programs? How are essentialist views of class challenged, i.e., does everyone have to think about social class and experience class discrimination in the same way for it to be authentic? Do course speakers represent a diversity of opinions and a diversity of other identities?

How do we make space for both/and perspectives? Regarding scholarship, writing, and language, do we accept both non-Standard speaking and writing and the various forms of Standard English as legitimate forms of expression when they effectively communicate (Adler-Kassner, 1999)? How does worthiness figure into standards? How is "bigger and better" embedded into our philosophy?

How do programs raise awareness of and challenge classism in language use? How is language co-opted to categorize, exclude, and discriminate (Minnow, 1990)? Language

does not adequately attend to the multiple meanings of class. Those who are being spoken about, rather than with, such as "the poor," may not have the power to construct the language that is being used to label them (Baker, 1996). It is essential to explore multiple perceptions of and language about social class experiences (Wyche, 1996) as these will vary. How do programs encourage increased language awareness while acknowledging limited social class experiences may require time to become more bi-lingual and language sensitive?

How are the effects of class oppression in the educational system recognized on faculty, students, and their interactions? For example, faculty members, after years of working though the academic class system, continue to suffer the effects of both oppression from that "climb" as well as continue to struggle in the roles they presently have, especially non-tenured faculty. This attitude of struggle is often conveyed to students in regards to academic "hoops." "Well, that's the way it is. I had to do it, so you need to do it."

In regards to doctoral qualifying exams, some faculty in my doctoral program have used their power to share their expertise and/or gather together students who had been through the fire, to help students prepare both emotionally and academically for the ordeal. While this was extremely helpful, this did not benefit all students equally. Association privileged certain students while others continued to suffer the full brunt of the experience. Students, in an effort to support their classmates coming behind them, went to great lengths to ease the way with study guides, helpful hints, and encouraging study groups, etc. Those who benefited were associated in some way to these students, friends of friends. There was no common information equally assessable to all students,

for example, by a student handbook. Students who were full time, were on departmental assistantships, or did not have outside employment, had the greatest access to this informal information network. Through student feedback, several caring faculty members were instrumental in sharing their power to change the qualifying exams. The exams became less of a passage of torture and more open to a variety of theoretical viewpoints. Yet, even this method privileges those who read, think and write quickly and concisely, are computer-adept and have more modern, decontextualized theories.

Therapy of resistance. How do we connect in therapy the social class issues that impact our clients with the socio-political contexts around them including local, state, national and/or global situations? If class unrest, struggle, and rebellion are kept from us as children in the history books and in the history lessons, what are the lessons that we as "good citizen" mental health professionals are expected to absorb and uphold? Foremost, that people ought to be content with the socio-political climate and their lives. Discontent is an aberration. This refocuses responsibility on the individual rather than society. As citizens and responsible family therapists, our job becomes to soothe the discontent. We refocus discontent by having therapists and clients explore the question "who am I" or "what's wrong with me" rather than "what's going on here." This further edifies American narcissism that disassociates the individual from the social whole (Lapham, 1988). Ken Hardy (1990) called this the "neglect of context" (p. 18).

Therapy sterilized from its context becomes the consumption of another fleeting commodity. This decontextualizing of the individual can be through talk therapy, cognitive restructuring or medicating the individual to learn to live with "their" unhappiness. Uneasy discontent may be the rage of the working-class, the gnawing

dissatisfaction of the middle class or the boredom, guilt or numbing of the ruling classes.

We are called to silence fear: the fear of falling down the ladder to poverty, the fear of

being gripped by the slippery slope of greed and mindless consumption, and the

underlying fear of class war which could result in the potential loss of privilege, status, or

entitlement for which we have suffered and struggled.

Supervision in our programs and therapy conducted by students must be embedded in

awareness of context including but not limited to social class issues. This may require

bringing into the supervision room the linkage between current client issues and relevant

contemporary socio-political issues. While supervisors must be cognizant of imposing

and not creating space for alternative perspectives on these issues, merely raising

awareness of the possible connections for the client's context is very important.

Exploring potential oppression because of the dominant social class discourse may

create space for fruitful conversations, validation, and empowerment. As supervisors and

therapists, we recognize that many of our clients who have been exploited and

discriminated against because of their social class may bear some of the "scars of

exploitation. Their problems are often manifestations of the dehumanization process

(Freire, 1968). Clients have not created their own problems but rather are actively

resisting imposition and discrimination from more powerful others. Clients cannot be

understood apart from this context (Faunce, 1990). Using social class as well as other

relevant social constructs to analyze their situations we recognize that

> psychological distress is a reasonable response to this confluence of crazy-
> making external factors. Our attention is directed to these systems and
> institutions that both create and maintain our client's oppression. (p. 188)

As therapists we first help our clients unearth their memories, raise their consciousness

and encourage them to give voice to their shame of worthlessness, fear of powerlessness

and rage of injustice. We help the client to tap into their stories and "traditions of great personal strength and resourcefulness" (Faunce, 1990. p. 190) and highlight how the client has previously resisted. We sharpen their awareness of the signs of class oppression by giving courage: by listening to their resisting bodies and privileging their feelings. We encourage them to bring from the "back of their minds" their thoughts of rebellion and their voices of silent disagreement. We encourage them to share information and seek support with potential allies and plan the moments to become visible and vocal. We acknowledge the time needed to rest from confrontation, mourn injustice and gather strength for more resistance. We tell stories about and celebrate victories, however seemingly small and we build on that resistance. This builds the belief that it is possible to overcome powerlessness and fight back (Johnstone, 1984) even if it is not safe to do so overtly.

Cross-fertilization. Intentional "cross fertilization" across disciplinary lines but within and outside of mental health profession can produce a bounty of ideas illuminating social class issues. Women, African American, and Latino Studies have provided models of collaboration such as interdisciplinary journals, guest columns, joint conferences, workshops, classes, panels and articles created from more than one discipline. Such collaborative endeavors are very productive for educators and therapists alike. Family therapy has a long history of being stimulated by other disciplines (e.g. psychology, biology, physics, sociology, etc.). The practical application will and has come from family therapists once the dialogue begins to flow. The language used can initially be intimidating, but we have experience of being "bi-lingual," quickly entering into new language systems. With adequate space and time, dialogue and explanation will bridge

the two languages (and perspectives), hopefully without subordinating one perspective under the other.

Space for reflecting and the sparking of new, creative ideas will only come from a cross-fertilization that decenters the dominant voices (Collins, 1998), supports coalitions of more marginal groupings and nurtures dialogue that allows a multiplicity of perspectives to thrive and grow (Schutte, 1998). This must be accomplished without collapsing all voices into the "One" (Irigaray, 1985) or the "Other" (Alcoff, 1998) perspectives and actively resisting the view subaltern perspectives are deficient (Mullings, 1997), referential or to be swallowed (hooks, 1993). We need to respectfully incorporate new perspectives without "colonizing" them, i.e. stealing them without acknowledgment.

We all benefit from drawing and viewing life from outside of the lines. Programs that have a strong identity can create space to encourage thinking beyond the enclosures of the discipline by encouraging students to take some courses outside of the program, to bring in life experiences beyond the focus of the program, and to make connections with disciplines beyond family therapy.

In the energy created by this new space, new conversations, and new coalitions that differing perspective on social class can be created. Often the texts we read, the speakers we hear, the conferences we attend are discipline bound. Before long, they bind up our minds and creativity. By stepping outside our discipline perspectives in a variety of ways, we renew the life-blood of family therapy. Some enclosures, however, are supportive, protective and create a sense of identity and belonging. These enclosures can be life enhancing and create enough support for creativity if they are not too restrictive.

Difference can revitalize and help us to value our discipline's strengths even as we attempt to explain some of our standpoints to those outside our discipline. In opening ourselves to the "Other" outside our own enclosures, we can both critique our limitations and appreciate our strengths. Inviting differing perspectives both from within the walls of our programs and our discipline, as well as inviting participation from outside may be very fruitful.

Beyond programs: Embracing responsibility

Family therapy educators, supervisors, and therapists have a responsibility beyond programs and clients. As Nancy Boyd Franklin (1993) challenged us, we have a social responsibility to get involved with issues that are part of the national agenda that effect our clients. An example of one national issue that impacts us all, clients and family therapists, is health care reform.

Coalitions and political connections. As family therapists along with other health care workers, we have been socialized to believe that we are "professionals." It is not the job title but power, independence and degree of authority that puts people in different classes. Most professionals tend to have more flexibility about their jobs than wage earners. We generally earn more money and have less physical risk directly associated with our work. We usually can afford benefits, are more likely to work in comfortable environments, and have more control and job security. We work long hours with little supervision although we are expected to work within the ethical parameters set by our professional organizations. Like other laborers, new or "apprentice" professionals undergo intense supervision, large caseloads, long hours, and pressure to create "billable" hours while attempting to engage in quality therapy with little control over the pace of

their work. Most professional groups can be disciplined by each other or a consumer via their association or state boards rather than by 'management.'

Managed competition. Social class among mental health professionals as well as with other professionals in the health "industry" is part of family therapy's occupational reality. To the degree we feel privileged in this ranking system, family therapists are silent and satisfied. When we are excluded from just compensation because of our discipline or profession, family therapists are outraged at the injustice. By ignoring social class issues, we silence our voices, limit our imaginations, and disempower ourselves by refusing to organize collectively.

Because of "professional" status, family therapists may not feel we have much in common with industrial labor history. Yet, the same tactics that were used under the guise of scientific management to control the autonomy of both skilled and unskilled factory workers are slowly being enforced with family therapists and other health professionals. The centralization of power in the hands of insurance companies under the guise of "managed care" has increasingly limited the social mobility of new family therapists. HMO's have brought "penetration of big business and capitalist methods into the medical work process" (Zweig, 2000, p. 35). We are often working more hours for less money and under greater supervision. Our supervision comes from those who are compensated by the insurance companies, often without benefit of trained personnel. Our skilled work has given us some status in the medical industry, especially in comparison to the masses of "unskilled" health workers and support staff who have little more than minimum wage jobs and little collective voice. The professional associations work in our interest to create and hold onto the toehold we have in healthcare.

As family therapists we are part of a disciplinary division, which create some status by our training and areas of expertise. At times there are territorial or state distinctions as a result of licensure and certification. Our professional association serves to create identity association with our systemic focus. Along with the majority of "unskilled" health workers who have no right to voice, these divisions among both mental health care professionals and other health professionals create competition and result in an uneasy alliance-by-default with the power (the insurance industry) that confers and rewards these status distinctions.

Turf wars. Turf wars are the parallel process between what happened when the working-class tried to unionize but racism, ethnocentrism, nationalism, regionalism, religious prejudice and sexism pitted the various groups against one another. Each protected their turf or "limited pie." This is very similar to what is happening with the health and especially the mental health profession when the overseers (the insurance companies) pit the various "professionals" against one another, as each struggles to be recognized and earn a just wage for the hours of training they have put in. Just as other racial or ethnic or gender groups before, those who get the biggest piece are not necessarily those with the most experience.

This serves to breakdown our united power, creating barriers and turf wars in which we spend more time fighting one another rather than working together against the powers that oppress us. Like the besieged workers everywhere, we feel overwhelmed, not by the same physical dangers but rather by increased physical demands upon our bodies as therapists work more hours for less compensation to meet the growing needs of consumers also impacted by increased work demands or growing unemployment.

Our mental enclosures and elitism keeps us from even imagining coalitions between, for example, massage therapists, acupuncturists, and other health care workers. This is not to suggest naively that all our goals would be the same. Coalitions rather than unions would be most effective. We all struggle with issues of compensation and insurance industry regulation. Family therapists have unique skills of seeing systems systemically and helping parties negotiate some common goals.

Like our professional predecessors, in spite of rhetoric that suggests that we might use our expertise for the good of our clients, we see many divisions between *them and us*. All too often, many of us are white and middle class. As therapists, we are, however, overwhelmingly women. And as the feminization of those in the health field increases, the salaries decrease. In essence, we are being subjected to the age-old time and motions studies–how many billable hours can we get in? This does not suggest that efficiency is not an important value, but "productivity" should not be our end goal! We are in the business of helping hearts to heal.

Coalitions include client/consumers. Disciplining ourselves or being disciplined by consumers is an important way of assuring that our clients needs are being met. We have an immense responsibility to provide caring and competent therapy to consumers. When the needs of big business rather than the needs of clients are propelling the curtailing of services, the chiseling of fees, and the dispassionate surveillance as well as making all health care a luxury rather than a basic right of citizens, consumers and therapists are both impacted by social class issues. Only clients and therapists who can mutually afford out of pocket fees for services have the class power to ignore this trend.

We sign contracts that give away our rights and yet like many workers, most of us may feel we have no other choice. There is a difference, however. We have a more direct relationship with our consumer. Although our "client' in the sense of who directly pays most of the bill is the insurance company, in reality that insurance money comes out of the pocket of the consumer of our services. We have an ethical responsibility to not use our "consumers" for our own end. This is an issue for both consumers and therapists, however. Waiting for hindsight may be too late as both of our needs may be ignored.

The "social class" model of distance between the client and the expert therapist may keep us from participating in an important health care coalition along with other mental and other health care providers as well as "unskilled" support workers. Rather than being lulled into ignoring the social class realities and merely protecting our own privilege (by focusing exclusively on our professional associations), we have an opportunity to create powerful coalitions which can give back adequate health care to more consumers and equitable compensation for ourselves and other workers. While not directed towards family therapists, Michael's Zweig (2000) challenged workers to develop values that confront the "raw individualism of the capitalist marketplace" which encouraged "self-interested greed." In the end, our own self-focused concerns may leave us out cold in the "limited pie" of compensation. Family therapist educators can encourage a vision of collective social responsibility, respect for human dignity and justice that demands quality health care and equitable compensation.

Circular, systemic reflexivity

Juggling many responsibilities, dedicated family therapy educators along with their students have created a solid foundation that challenges the dominant social class discourse in many aspects, most notably by their standpoints of solidarity, respect, and

collaboration with poor and working-class clients who have been most marginalized and impacted by social class discrimination. Along with challenging therapists to reflect on their own privilege and social class biases, these family therapy programs have provided strong leadership in shaping the profession of family therapy to begin to deconstruct social class discourse. Most faculty and students in these programs continued to equate social class with "the poor," "the poor" with people of color, and the social class of the therapist with at least the middle class. The focus on these *visible* aspects of social class leave several important aspects *invisible*: the privilege of the powerful, the oppression of the white poor/working-class, and the social class of the therapist. These aspects of the dominant social class discourse continued to infiltrate many programs in spite of socially conscious perspectives. The need for personal and programmatic reflection within the socio-political context as a regular and intentional part of professional work requires circular, systemic reflexivity to counteract the influence of the dominant social discourse.

Summary of recommendations

In the programs, recommendations include:

- Increased emphasis on social class self-reflexivity and its interaction with other social constructs first for faculty/supervisors and then for student/therapists in supervision, academic courses and in informal contact and participation in the program.
- Formal and informal opportunities for program reflexivity regarding social class with other social constructs via focus groups, annual feedback forums, surveys, suggestion boxes that resulted in changes of attitude and concrete action towards eliminating social class discrimination. Evaluation of progress towards goals by task force.
- Embracing the concept that education is a system of privilege, lobbying for adequate need-based financial scholarships not just based on academic merit.
- Incorporation of social class issues in separate courses, units, readings as well as weaving it into conversations and issues as appropriate, e.g. genograms, while not isolating it from other social constructs of race, sex/gender, sexual orientation and other social constructs of identity, power, and privilege.
- Support student organizing such as working-class student groups and student- led task forces to work on social class concerns. Provide program forum for reporting and

recommendations for action. May work with faculty advisors to be aware of administrative and financial constraints.

- Focus on social class issues in therapy along with other contextual issues. Explore possible social class discrimination and oppression as a result of the dominant social class discourse, highlighting resistance, strengths and exceptions.
- Evaluate circular, systemic reflexivity of program, noting areas needing action.

Beyond the programs, additional recommendations include:

- More student assistance for memberships, scholarships to conferences for registration, lodging, etc., e.g. one year there was a lottery from an advertiser for registration.
- Having the conferences at more affordable sites, negotiating for student lodging rates, or having alternative, economical lodging within safe walking distance.
- Encouraging and supporting of conference themes and workshops that highlight social class and its interaction with other social constructs.
- Financial supports for programs that are role models in meeting incorporating social class into their curriculum, supervision, and overall program.
- More emphasis on research that highlights social class issues.
- Organizing among mental health professionals while recognizing the multiple identities and loyalties among us. We do not have to collapse our identity as family therapists "under" the umbrella of a more dominant group. By being in coalition, we can maintain a separate identity but work together on common needs.
- More collaboration and coalition building among health care professionals, especially in solidarity with those on the "bottom" of the hierarchy to combat the "limited pie" ideology and focus on challenging the insurance industry.
- Encourage circular, systemic reflexivity of the profession noting areas needing action.

Further Explorations

Limitations of this Study

What is missing from the gaze? Initially, reflection on my standpoint as a white researcher made me aware that I was not highlighting race in my guiding questions. My gender standpoint reminded me of this but initially, my experiential gaze did not know how to weave race into this project. I had a gut reaction that I could not study social class without including some other aspects of identity but did not know how I could do this. I knew I had to limit the focus of this project yet, felt uncomfortable privileging gender or race over age, sexual orientation, ability and other social constructs of identity. I finally

decided on an uneasy acknowledgement of my own limitations of time, space, and energy while opening myself to any data that might emerge from group participants.

Missing in other accounts of other "gazes" was the impact of the structures on students, faculty, and the profession; missing sometimes is our awareness of how our cultural history impacts our actions within our profession. The deliberate moving of services out of the home–whether financial aid, medical or therapy services, to the "clinic" gave the helper more status and control. It also made private practice more lucrative. Who can afford to pay for the time driving back and forth to homes, especially remote, rural homes? Who pays for the times that the client is not there? At least in the office, the therapist has some control. This avoids the thorny dilemmas of telling the client that their TV is interrupting therapy, deciding what to do when the client offers food, or the drop-in neighbor challenges confidentiality. Do ethics courses explore the complex situations of non-office based practice?

In this research, I chose to explore social class issues in four programs that acknowledged the importance of social class through their program literature and faculty writings. As this was exploratory research, groups that had "broken" the taboo about discussing social class had some language ability and experience to describe these issues. The findings in this research may have limited direct application to programs that do not have theoretical orientations that acknowledge social class. Further study of these unique settings may be necessary to appropriately adapt these recommendations.

Future Research

There are a number of areas for further research. This study focused on accredited family therapy programs. How might the research differ from non-accredited programs? Each of these programs also demonstrated an awareness of the importance of social class

as a construct through their program literature, including faculty writings. What different finding might emerge from programs that do not visibly acknowledge the importance of social class? What impact did this have with a volunteer, convenience sample of faculty and students who knew who were discussing social class? How did this self-selection process influence the findings? What information might emerge if support staff such as administrative assistants, maintenance crews, or technical staff were including in the research? What other information would emerge if non-program administrative personnel were included? How would these findings be different if there were mixed focus groups of students and faculty?

Participants spoke from their experiences of race, health/ability, religion/spirituality, ethnicity, nationality, sex/gender and sexual orientation. Research exploring social class and other focused aspects of identity may offer further clarification of social class in the U.S. Because my research comes from my particular working-class and other interacting identities standpoint, exploring social class from positions of more or less privilege may offer new insights and perspectives. I initially wanted to include perspectives from clients or former clients. Because of the difficulties securing access to clients, I abandoned that plan within the scope of a doctoral dissertation. Clients, however, could have a wealth of knowledge to contribute from their experiences of their social class being acknowledged or ignored within therapy.

I am curious about exploring the events that conspire to make people more self-conscious and aware. Why do some poor and working-class folks cling to the myths, not seeing their powerlessness, how they are blamed and hurt and others see so clearly? What obscures their reality? It is in those moments of "otherness" that identity is formed

and groups of people develop and fan the consciousness How do other aspects of identity help people to recognize the power, privilege and oppression of social class?

"The" working-class does not exist. Whether any particular working-class group is influenced and privileged by gender, sexual orientation, the region, race, age, ethnicity, health or inter-class partnerships, whatever the factors there is no essential working-class group or working-class values that all groups necessarily hold in common. That said, I do think many working-class groups are influenced by similar contexts that reinforce certain meanings, producing certain values. Some groups internalize and reify these values, and other groups find different meanings and different strategies for coping.

> the economic realities of working-class life and the constraints they impose upon living are the common ingredients from which a world of shared understandings arises, from which consciousness and a culture grows that is distinctly working class. Whether in ways of being in the family, in child-rearing patterns, in orientation toward work and leisure -- common experiences create common adaptations, all responses to a particular set of life circumstances. (Rubin, 1976, p.161)

Further research into social class identity, especially working-class identity, would be important. What are the liabilities and advantages for the working-class to embrace class identity? For those who have experienced chronic poverty, what are the advantages and liabilities of using this lens and identity? How about other "working-class" subaltern groups who experience race, ethnic, religious, gender or other kinds of oppression? How does social class location and social class identity differ? When do they converge? How do you explore any social identity without ignoring other interacting aspects of identity?

Four other areas that seemed to offer a wealth of unexplored information related to social class intrigue me. One area is the issue of language. I was surprised by the class markers, the wonderful proverbs and metaphors that emerged, the use of counter-discourse indicators and the use of the word "class" to denote ranking in systems other

than the traditional social identities. I find myself still somewhat confused by the distinction between social class and status. I am more sensitive to the classism in our language use but I wonder what I still overlook.

A second area that I would be interested in exploring is the connection between "body work" and discrimination. How does privileging of our cognitive and language abilities prevent us from utilizing resources that would empower us to do better supervision and therapy? How could body awareness be more effectively incorporated into self-reflexive work in therapy/supervision as well as for our clients? As systemic therapists, how do we use all the resources that are available to help our clients and us effectively address and take action to resolve our concerns? What are the barriers that prevent us from utilizing these resources in collaboration with our own work?

A third area of interest would be to do comparative studies with other countries. How do differing perspectives on social class influence the process of family therapy education and training as well as therapy? How do national discourses on social class differ from the dominant beliefs held in the United States? How might these differences effect the profession, the educational structures and therapy?

A fourth area of research would be exploratory studies of circular, systemic reflexivity. What similar concepts are being utilized in program evaluation both in family therapy education as well as other disciplines? What adaptations need to be made to utilize a circular process of reflection that values both personal and programmatic reflection while exploring the influence of the overall socio-political context? How do these theories keep the various aspects of the system in an interacting balance?

Finally, it would be interesting to do follow-up research to see what impact the focus group conversations had on the programs, therapy and participants in this research project. Following Pinderhughes' (1989) challenge, I wonder how having conversations which deconstruct social class increase the effectiveness of both the process and outcome of therapy with clients, not only of the "overwhelmed" clients targeted in their research, but clients of all social classes?

Conclusion

Summary

This research explored how faculty and students at four accredited family therapy programs deconstructed social class discourse. These programs challenged this discourse by having a commitment to exposing their students' to clients oppressed by class discrimination and in many creative ways, providing therapy to these clients. Faculty and several program directors saw it as their responsibility to incorporate social class issues into classroom and supervision whenever possible. At least one program incorporated social class issues into their regular curriculum. Classism and some of the myths of the dominant discourse crept into these programs in spite of these commitments. Some faculty and students failed to challenge the assumption that social class issues only impact "the poor" and especially women of color.

Opportunities to consider self-reflexivity around social class issues when doing supervision and therapy were reported to be rare unless the client was presumed to be "poor." This effectively kept the supervisor and the therapist out of the explicit social class equation, leaving unchallenged the assumption that both were members of the professional, middle or upper middle class. Social class issues impacting the students were generally not addressed, allowing the class oppression experienced by students to

continue without explicit acknowledgment. Only one faculty participant raised this as a program issue and one faculty participant commented on the class discrimination within the structures that supported the programs. Given the isomorphic nature of ranking within the structures of academia, the profession, the mental health field, and the program in general, class discrimination among the faculty may also be an issue.

Students generally felt that faculty did not provide enough leadership in making class discrimination in the programs and the profession an explicit issue. They did believe, however, that when students brought these issues to their attention and suggested specific solutions, the faculty would respond with concern and support.

Circular, systemic reflexivity is needed to reflect on the circular interaction of the various parts of the system in which family therapy educators and programs are embedded. Family therapists already value reflection on self of the therapist issues, recognizing the therapist as part of the therapeutic system. Family therapy programs must take the time to incorporate program reflexivity into their educational agendas while continuing to support personal reflection on social class issues and their interactions with other social constructs as programs are embedded in a socio-political context. Circular, systemic reflexivity will help resist the classist, dominant discourse that infiltrates family therapy programs in spite of visionary, committed faculty.

This research was conducted within a context of exploring the theoretical and historical discourses about social class in the United States. These sources, the data from the research participants as well as the review of theoretical and historical discourses, were combined along with my own personal experiences of social class to provide research triangulation for the conclusions and recommendations reached in this study.

Final Reflections

Family therapy educators, supervisors and therapists need to understand the socio-political implications of the discourse of social class in order to mindfully resist society's subliminal invitation to be agents of social control with our students and with our clients. As Susan Wolfe (1994) wrote in her article "Getting class":

> class may have been the central, driving force shaping my thinking, my feelings, and my relationships. . . . the influence of class has been at once so pervasive and so woven into my sensibilities and reactions that I've never been able to isolate or analyze it before. . . . I'm finally starting to "get" class." (p. 291)

It's time for us all, including family therapy educators, to "get" class. It is not sufficient, however, for us to solely do this personally and individually. We must take the time to externalize our reflections both as educators/therapists and as a whole program in order to resist the dominant social class discourse.

We must see, be aware and remember that social class as well as other organizing discourses in the matrix of domination, invites us to accept, be complacent and even embrace the belief that some of us are better than others. This belief in turn allows us to justify poverty, unequal distribution of resources and force, including war, to justify a "better life" with the "finer things in life" for those who are deemed by the more powerful as the most valued and worthy. Challenging these discourses requires externalization both personally and through programs: circular, systemic reflexivity.

I feel an incredible sense of gratitude to have been part of this research journey. It was a powerful and moving experience to see people name what they already felt in their hearts. I am thankful for the role that I was allowed to play in that. It has been a journey of exploration and healing for some of the classism that I have experienced. I hope it might empower other educators and therapists who have felt the sting of class oppression

to raise awareness, make social class issues visible, speak out against classism, and share their power to take concrete actions to confront social class discrimination.

Dear Dr. _____:

I am a colleague of Andres Nazario's at the Gainesville Family Institute. He is also on my doctoral committee at the University later of Florida. He told me that he had mentioned to you and a few others about my dissertation project on social class and that you might be interested in participating.

I am looking for family therapy programs to do focus groups about social class and therapy/education. I would like to do one group with therapy students, one with supervisors/faculty and ideally, one group with clients. I understand that you might be interested in asking your students to participate in the student therapists focus groups. I would facilitate the groups and they would take two hours each. I would love to do the research later this fall but would also consider January of next year. I am very flexible about a possible schedule.

Would you be interested? I would be glad to give you more details. I am very interested in race, gender, sexuality and class issues as a "matrix of domination" but would especially be highlighting social class in these conversations.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Lynne Rigney Barolet

What? Social class is an invisible and taboo topic in U.S. society. Unexamined, classism as a societal discourse scapegoats those who are least powerful in society and obscures those who most benefit (Alcoff, 1998; Foucault, 1972.) Acknowledging class in therapy destabilizes class privilege and internalized classism (Kliman,1998) such as shame, guilt, resentment and stigma.

Why? By participating in the research project, social class is highlighted, class sensitivity and awareness is encouraged. As supervisors and therapists examine class assumptions, including us in the class equation, ideas for more effective theories for recognizing the influence of social class along with other social constructions such as race, gender, and sexual orientation will be developed. In exchange for participating in the research project, I would be willing to present a one to three hour workshop on social class with students and / or faculty or do presentations for classes.

Who? Ideally, I would like to do three focus groups at your site, although I would be willing to come for any of these groups. Volunteers will be recruited to participate in one of the three focus groups. One focus group would consist of faculty/supervisors, one group would be student therapists, and the last groups would be clients. No group would have more than eight participants. I would be willing to do more than one student therapist focus group if there is sufficient interest.

How? I would facilitate each group and audio/videotape after securing the appropriate consents. Guiding research questions will be submitted the week before the research visit. I will be available for questions by phone and email. I will transcribe the tapes using a social constructionist perspective and grounded theory for coding. A research support and reflecting team will serve to add their own reflections about the emerging data and my own analysis. The preliminary reports will be submitted to participants for feedback that will be incorporated into the final report, hopefully by late Spring 2001.

When? My preference would be to conduct the research in this early Spring 2001. I hope to do each of the three two-hour focus groups over two days. Any two-day period excluding Monday is possible, although my preference would be for a Thursday/Friday.

If You Are Still Interested ...? What is the next step? Would this idea get presented at a faculty meeting? Do you have an internal research board through which I will need to get approval? (This has already been approved through UF's IRB for the preliminary study and is in the approval process for the continuing study). For more information, contact Lynne Rigney Barolet, M.A., LMFT, (352) 376-5543 lbarolet@ufl.edu.

APPENDIX C
STUDENT INVITATION

"Remember when race and gender were considered insignificant?" [this would be the subject line] ". . . at least that's what you might have thought by the previous lack of attention given to these critical topic areas in our family therapy curriculums. Most of us might assume the same thing today about social class.

I think race, gender and social class are connected in very significant ways. I would like to highlight **social class** and its linkages to race, gender, and similar social constructs by having a student focus group on this topic. If you are interested in this area or are curious, **you are invited to participate in a student focus group.**

If you are interested in participating in this important research, please see the attached [below] for more information. Thank You! Lynne Rigney Barolet

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I am a couples and family therapy doctoral students in Counselor Education at the University of Florida and a licensed family therapist in private practice and a faculty member/supervisor at the Gainesville Family Institute, a post-graduate training program.

I believe social class does impact the training and the therapy we do. I'm trying o sort out the ramifications of social class even as we are beginning to recognize the significance of race, gender and other socially constructed contexts. **I'm curious about what you think.** And I need your help.

I will be visiting _____ on _____ and I need students to participate in an hour and a half focus group to discuss social class and its implications for therapy and supervision. I will audio-tape the group and will transcribe the information for analysis. I will be glad to share a report of the results of my research with you and would be eager for further feedback. and make my dissertation available.

For more information, please contact me at lbarolet@ufl.edu. My work number is (352)376-5543. My faculty chair is Dr. Silvia Echevarria-Doan (formerly Silvia Rafuls.)

My local contact is _____.

Thank you!   Lynne Rigney Barolet

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the _____ focus groups!

In an effort to be more collaborative, these are the five general, guiding questions that
will provide focus for the groups.

- **What is social class and how do you identify your own class status?**

- **How are clients, therapists, or faculty/supervisors in this program encouraged to
highlight, voice and make visible social class issues in therapy and in training?**

- **What restrains clients, therapists, or faculty/supervisors from discussing social
class?**

- **How does the presence of these conversations about social class influence the
process of therapy education and supervision, and ultimately impact the client?**

- **How does the absence of these conversations about social class influencethe
process of therapy education and supervision, and ultimately impact the client?**

It would be e helpful for participants to begin to think about these general questions
before the focus group while refraining from discussing them with other participants. I
hope that many fresh perspectives and ideas might emerge from the interaction within the
focus groups, unconstrained by recent conversations.

I'm looking forward to meeting with you on _____!

Lynne Rigney Barolet

INFORMED CONSENT

You are invited to participate in a dissertation research project exploring social class. This researcher is a doctoral candidate from the Counselor Education program at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida and is also a licensed marriage and family therapist, an AAMFT approved supervisor and on the faculty of a training program. The purpose of this study is to explore social class and its impact on therapy and supervision . Each participant will be part of a focus group of either therapists or supervisors/faculty from a training program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE). Each focus group will meet once for an hour to two hours. A summary and analysis will be made available within six months after the focus group and feedback will be invited. Participation is voluntary.

You may choose not to participate in this project, or you may withdraw from participation at any point in the study. You may choose not to answer any of the questions that this researcher asks during the discussions. Choosing to withdraw from this study will not influence the supervision that you receive here or negatively impact your relationship to your training program. You will experience no harm or risk by participating in this study. You identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. It is hoped that the information gathered from this study will have benefits to student therapists, supervisors and faculty of training programs. This study may also generate useful information for further exploration to improve clinical services to clients.

A copy of the final results of the doctoral study will also be made available to participants at the completion of the doctoral study which is estimated to be by August, 2001. If you have any questions or comments about this project you may contact the researcher, Lynne Rigney Barolet at (372) 376- 5543. You may also contact her doctoral supervisor, Silvia Echevarria-Doan. If you have any further concerns about this research project, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at the University of Florida and/or discuss your concerns with your local site host. (Please see attached sheet for all contact information).

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

I have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this study. I have had an opportunity to ask any questionsand have any information clarified before signing this consent. I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

_____   _____
    Participant's Signature   Date

TITLE OF PROJECT: Deconstructing Social Class: Conversations for Family Therapy Education and Supervision

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IRB Protocol # 2001-35   Exp. Jan.31, 2002

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lynne Rigney Barolet was born in Rhode Island, the sixth of nine children in a French-Irish, Catholic, working-class family. She earned her BA in Psychology from Catholic University in Washington, D.C, her MA in Family Ministry from Fordham University in the Bronx, New York and a post-graduate certificate in family therapy from the Center for Couples and Family Development in Gainesville, Florida. She is currently a licensed marriage and family therapist at the Gainesville Family Institute, Gainesville, Florida. She has been in a wonderful, relationship for twenty-nine years and is honored to be a co-parent of two incredible young adults and the guardian of her youngest sister. Lynne enjoys genealogy, languages, travel, teaching, soccer, and social justice advocacy.

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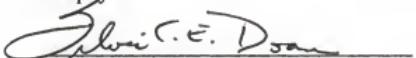
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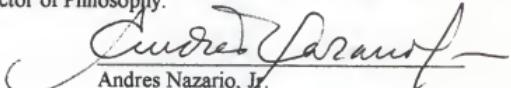
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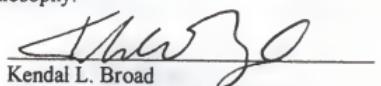
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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December, 2002
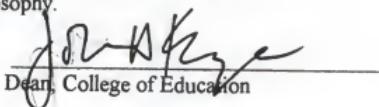
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